

Period III.

1720 to 1727.

particularly useful at this juncture, because he had furnished which earl Stanhope possessed in the cabinet of V. du Bois, who was gratified with a large pension, and who, by his artful management of the earl of Stair, to the office of foreign affairs. Du Bois was no sooner nominated to this post, than he appropriated to himself the management of the most important affairs of importance passed through his hands alone, and the respective councils were dismissed *. Stair, who had been negotiating at Paris with great address, having quitted France, then directed the affairs of finance, and in conjunction with the regent, Stanhope himself repaired to London. A person with the regent and du Bois, the plan of future correspondence. Stair was recalled, and succeeded by the duke of Devonshire. The failure of the Mississippi scheme, which reduced the nation to bankruptcy, and the disgrace of Law, increased the influence of Stair, and his nomination to the archbishopric of Cambria. The express interposition of George the First †.

On the death of earl Stanhope, du Bois was un-
new ministers should not treat him with the same con-
aware that his credit with the regent would cease, if
which had been recently maintained between Engla-
diminished. He was, however, soon undeceived ; le
secretary of state, expressed his resolution in a letter
taining the friendship between the two kingdoms, a
pliments to him, as the person who had first prom-
alliance, which had been so highly beneficial to both

**Sends Sir
Luke Schaub
to Paris.**

On the death of Craggs, and the removal of Su-
fions of du Bois were again revived and increased by
in the British cabinet, and by exaggerated accounts
affairs in England, from the failure of the South Sea
experienced the ill effects of these rumours, from the
to his measures by the parliament of Paris, in con-
sidered the alliance with England as no less dan-
gerous. For the purpose of removing these alarm-
ing rumours, the king deputed to Paris by Carteret. Schaub was a native
the confidential secretary of earl Stanhope, through

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

dependence and connections with du Bois had been principal. On the reconciliation with Spain, in 1719, he had been sent where he remained till the arrival of William Stanhope, afterwards Harrington. Soon after his return to England, he repaired to Paris, where he was employed by earl Stanhope in keeping up the harmony between the two courts, and dispelling the doubts and suspicions which prevailed on both sides. On the death of Stanhope, he was considered as the fittest person to repair to Paris.

The arrival of Schaub gave great satisfaction to du Bois, who relied on Sir Robert Sutton; and who expressed a conviction that he should not long maintain his credit with the regent, if the conduct of that prince had hitherto reposed on the king of England should be found wanting. Schaub easily convinced the regent of the king's steadiness to his engagements, and thus supported the authority of du Bois. Soon afterwards recalled, Schaub solely managed the affairs of England, his influence increased, as du Bois was successively created, by the king of England, cardinal and prime minister. During these transactions, Schaub became the channel through whom the cabals of the Jacobites and the intrigues of Atterbury were communicated to the British cabinet.

Du Bois transferred his devotion to Carteret, as the minister supported by Sunderland, and who boasted that he had succeeded in his influence as well as to the principles of Stanhope: Schaub described him as a person who principally directed foreign affairs; and the friendship of whose good-will at this period was highly prized, increased his credit, and promoted the interest of Carteret.

On the death of Sunderland, du Bois offered, through Schaub, his interest with George the First in favour of Carteret, but he refused him to coalesce with Townshend and Walpole, because he would find it difficult to place himself at the head of the Whigs, and as it would be dangerous to throw the king into the arms of the Tories. In reply to these offers of assistance, Carteret expressed his gratitude to the cardinal, and informed Schaub, that he had previously resolved to conduct his manner, as well with a view to promote the king's service as his particular interest. He boasted, that he was sufficiently strong to resist dissensions but those which arise from the common danger to which they are subject; he added, that his principles would never change, and he desired him to convince the cardinal, that were he not fully persuaded

M E M O I R S

OF THE

LIFE AND ADMINISTRATION

OF

S I R R O B E R T W A L P O L E,

E A R L O F O R F O R D.

WITH ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE AND AUTHENTIC PAPERS,

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C O N T A I N I N G T H E M E M O I R S.

B Y W I L L I A M C O X E, M. A. F. R. S. F. A. S.

R E C T O R O F B E M E R T O N.

L O N D O N:

P R I N T E D F O R T. C A D E L L, J U N. A N D W. D A V I E S, I N T H E S T R A N D.

1798.



SIR ROBERT WALPOLE,

Earl of Orford

*From an Original Painting in the hands of one
of the Officers of the Tower of London*

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P R E F A C E.

IT is unnecessary to offer an apology for submitting to the Public, the Memoirs of Sir ROBERT WALPOLE, which embrace a period so important in the annals of this country. It will be sufficient to explain the motives which induced me to undertake this Work; to announce the plan; to state the authorities from which the materials are derived; and to acknowledge obligations.

Nine years have elapsed since I undertook to write *The Historical and Political State of Europe*; the plan of which was printed, and submitted to the public. In the prosecution of that work I obtained access to various collections of original papers, particularly those of the earls of *Hardwicke*, *Harrington*, and *Peterborough*, and of Sir *Benjamin Keene*. It was in such forwardness, that the histories of Spain, Portugal, Austria, the German constitution, Russia, and part of Prussia and Sweden, were already prepared for the press; I had also sketched the histories of the Italian States, Holland, and France: several maps were finished. Finding it impossible to obtain in England sufficient information respecting foreign countries, I visited Germany in 1794, with a view to obtain an accurate knowledge of recent events.

On my return, I went to Wolterton, for the purpose of inspecting the papers of Horatio lord Walpole, father of the present lord Walpole, whose interesting correspondence, during his embassies in France

and Holland, were of the utmost importance to my undertaking. I employed several months in perusing and arranging these papers. In the course of this occupation, I traced motives of action unknown to historians, which placed in a new light the foreign and domestic transactions of the cabinet. I also derived, from the conversation of lord and lady Walpole, many facts and anecdotes which elucidated the events adverted to in the papers.

The progress of the French revolution, and the uncertain position of Europe compelled me, notwithstanding the expence, and loss of time and labour, to suspend my original design, and to defer the completion of *The historical and political state*, till the return of more quiet and favourable times.

With the sanction of lord Walpole, I proposed, therefore, to give to the public a selection of his father's papers. In the course of this undertaking, I met with several letters and papers of Sir Robert Walpole, which made me solicitous to obtain farther information concerning his character and administration.

On my arrival in London, I had frequent conversations with the late earl of Orford, who related many anecdotes of his father, which led to further inquiries. It now insensibly became a part of my plan to blend in the narrative, as many particulars relating to Sir Robert Walpole as could be authenticated, and to insert, in the correspondence, as many of his letters as I could obtain.

This design was promoted by the kindness of lord Orford, who imparted to me all his father's papers which remained in his possession, and permitted me to use them at my discretion, without the smallest controul.

The connection and friendship which, for a long period, had subsisted between Sir Robert Walpole, and his brother-in-law Charles viscount Townshend, naturally suggested that the Townshend papers must afford considerable information.

The acquisition of these important documents, led to the discovery

very and communication of others, particularly in the *Hardwicke*, *Grantham*, *Waldegrave*, and *Poyntz* collections.

With these sources of information, the work gradually expanded, and Sir Robert Walpole from being a secondary, became the principal object. I therefore interrupted the impression of lord Walpole's correspondence, and postponed that publication. I determined to give to the world, the Memoirs of the Life and Administration of Sir Robert Walpole, drawn from these copious and original sources, and to illustrate, by interesting and authentic documents, the transactions of the busy and eventful period, in which that minister acted so conspicuous a part.

In pursuance of this extensive plan, I found myself under the necessity of discussing the interests of Great Britain and of Europe, of developing the intricacies of cabinets, of tracing motives of action, of delineating characters, and discriminating the views of discordant politics.

Anxious to avoid an error, too common with biographers, that of considering only one side of the question, I was no less solicitous to procure the papers of those who opposed, than of those who supported the measures of Sir Robert Walpole. With this view I applied for and obtained communications of the *Stanhope*, *Middleton*, *Melcombe*, and *Egremont* Papers. These I have printed without interpolation and without disguise, not omitting a single invective, but leaving the reader to judge between the partial eulogiums of Hervey, and the acrimonious reproaches of Bolingbroke.

The Plan of this work is to give an uninterrupted narrative of the life and administration of Sir Robert Walpole, illustrated by original correspondence and authentic papers.

The Memoirs, which are contained in the first volume, are divided into eight periods, comprehending a term of sixty-nine years, from his birth in 1676, to his death in 1745.

The

The Correspondence, which occupies the second and third volumes, is, for facility of reference, also divided into eight periods, plying to the subjects of the corresponding periods in the narrative.

The Authorities from which the materials are derived, may be divided into PRINTED, ORAL, and MANUSCRIPT information.

PRINTED INFORMATION.

Though this source of intelligence is open to every writer, and omission to consult and compare the advocates on both sides of the question, indicates either negligence or want of candour, yet *Smollett* and *Belsham*, in their accounts of the times, have betrayed the faults in the highest degree. Dazzled by the eloquence of *Henry St. John*, seduced by the sophistry of *Bolingbroke*, or deluded by the speciousness of *Chesterfield*, they appear to have formed their opinions without comparison, to have stigmatized the whole administration of *Sir Robert Walpole*, as an uniform mass of corruption and depravity, as a gloomy period, during which no single ray of light gleams through the impenetrable darkness. Though I have occasionally noticed the misrepresentations of these writers, yet, as *Smollett* quotes no authorities, and appears *never* to have consulted the Journals, and either partially or superficially to have perused the parliamentary debates; and as *Belsham* is, in general, a mere copyist of *Smollett* as to facts, though he differs from him in his speculations; I have not relied on either as an authority.

The history of England which I have principally consulted is the continuation of *Rapin*, published under the name of *Tindal*, principally written by *Dr. Birch*. His papers in the Museum, in the *Hardwicke Collection*, which I have examined with scrupulous attention, and various other documents which were submitted to his inspection, and to which I have had access, prove great accuracy of research, judgment in selection, and fidelity in narration. I have derived considerable assistance from persons of political eminence

particularly the late lord Walpole, the late earl of Hardwicke, and the honourable Charles Yorke *. Birch was a staunch Whig, but his political opinions have never led him to forget his duty as an historian. He has not garbled or falsified debates, or mistated facts; he has not wantonly traduced characters, or acrimoniously reviled individuals, because they espoused the cause which he disapproved; but in his whole work, whether he praises or blames, there is a manly integrity and candid temperance, which must recommend him to the discerning reader.

It naturally became a part of my task to consult all works which treat of the life and administration of Sir Robert Walpole; and it is remarkable, that except political pamphlets, which were confined to temporary and specific objects, my utmost research could only discover two publications.

The first is, "A critical History of the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole, now Earl of Orford, collected chiefly from the Debates in Parliament, and the political Writings on both Sides, 1743." This anonymous work is contemptible both in matter and style. It is, with few exceptions, a mere compilation from the most virulent opposition pamphlets, but is useful as an index of the points which, at the time, drew most attention, and as containing an account of the most remarkable publications on both sides.

The second is "*Histoire du Ministère du Chevalier Walpole devenu Ministre d'Angleterre, et Comte d'Oxford*, Amsterdam, 1764, "in three volumes." This work is principally compiled from the preceding publication, although the author affects greater impartiality, and frequently turns the most virulent censures into the most fulsome panegyric. The writer is so ignorant as to call him earl of *Oxford*, and so deficient in point of information, that the whole pe-

* The account of the partition treaty was written by the late earl of Hardwicke. The account of lord Somers's argument in Barker's case, was written by his great nephew, the late Mr. C. Yorke. I can also trace numerous communications by Horace Walpole, though they cannot be so easily specified.

riod, from the declaration of war against Spain in 1739, to the resignation of the minister in 1742, is contained in fourteen lines. Forces so partial and deficient, little information could be derived.

I have carefully consulted the political writings of the times, both sides of the question. I have perused with the same attention the most violent invectives, and party statements against the minister, as well as those that were written in his favour, and from a scrupulous comparison of both have endeavoured to extract the truth.

These works are too numerous to recapitulate. To the political writings of Bolingbroke, Pulteney, and Chesterfield, I have paid particular attention, and scrutinized them with a close, and, I trust, impartial inspection.

The "Craftsman," which commenced in 1727, was the great vehicle of opposition essays. This paper, as it always contained the strength of the arguments urged against the measures of government, detected with great eloquence and wit, has been assiduously examined. The Political State of Great Britain, the Historical Register, and Annals of Europe, ample and not incorrect periodical publications, have contributed information with respect to domestic events, points of chronology, and debates in parliament.

I have derived collateral assistance from the Gentleman's London Magazines, which were ably conducted.

I have occasionally collected the substance of debates from *Candler's* Parliamentary Proceedings, to the general accuracy of which, though recently called in question, several reasons have induced me to give credit.

1. They are taken from the contemporary papers, such as the Historical Register, and the Political State of Great Britain; the authors of which were frequently supplied with notes and memoranda by members of parliament. From the year 1735, when debates were no longer published in the Political State, the speeches were given in the Gentleman's Magazine by Guthrie, and in

London Magazine by Gordon, both of whom constantly attended in the gallery of the house, and received information from members of parliament.

2. There are among the Walpole and Orford papers minutes of Sir Robert Walpole's speeches, and occasional notes, taken by him in the house of commons, of those of other members. In comparing these minutes and notes with the speeches in Chandler, I generally find the leading expressions preserved in the debates; which proves the authenticity of those particular speeches, and furnishes a strong presumption in favour of the rest.

3. Several letters, which I have published in the Correspondence, contain brief accounts of the parliamentary proceedings, and in most instances accord with the printed debates.

4. Sir Robert Walpole told his son, the late earl of Orford, that his speeches were in general faithfully represented in the public prints.

5. Lord Bath assured the present bishop of Salisbury, Dr. Douglas, that most of his speeches were correctly given, yet better than he had delivered them.

From the 19th of November, 1740, many of the debates were *written* by Dr. Johnson, and published in the Gentleman's Magazine. Doubts have arisen concerning their authenticity. Some of Johnson's biographers have declared that they were partly composed by himself; another, Sir John Hawkins, that they were wholly fictitious; and Johnson himself is said to have confessed, that they were not authentic, and excepting their general import, were the work of his own imagination.

This account, however, is not perfectly consonant to fact. Either Johnson deceived himself into an exaggeration of his own powers, or his biographers mistook his assertion. The real truth is, that Johnson constantly received notes and heads of the speeches from

persons employed by Cave, and particularly from Guthrie. The bishop of Salisbury recollects to have seen several of these manuscripts which Guthrie communicated to him on the very day on which he obtained them, which were regularly transmitted to John and formed the basis of his orations.

ORAL AND MANUSCRIPT INFORMATION.

WALPOLE PAPERS.

My first and warmest acknowledgments are due to lord Walpole for the papers of his father Horatio, the first lord Walpole of Wolton, brother of Sir Robert Walpole, and ambassador in France and Holland. This collection has afforded the most ample materials. It contains his original correspondence, both public and private, well abroad as in England; many confidential letters which passed between him, the queen, and Sir Robert Walpole; various documents, memorials, and political dissertations, which afford the clearest insight into foreign affairs, and prove his active and indefatigable exertions.

A specific detail of this collection, which occupies no less than one hundred and forty folio volumes, must be referred to a future publication, in which I purpose to give a selection of the most interesting letters not inserted in this work.

I am also indebted to lord Walpole for many interesting anecdotes and explanations, which he had from his father.

ORFORD PAPERS.

The late earl of Orford, third son of Sir Robert Walpole, favoured me with access to all the papers of his father remaining in his possession.

Had this collection been preserved entire, it would have been invaluable and unparalleled, both for extent and importance, but some have been destroyed, others dispersed, and many lost. When he retired from office, the minister destroyed a large quantity. Not long before his death he said to his son, " Horace, when I am gone, you will find many curious papers in the drawer of this table," and mentioned, among others, the memorial which had been drawn up by Bolingbroke, and presented by the duchess of Kendal to the king. When his son, some time after his death, inspected the drawer, the papers were lost, and were never afterwards recovered. In relating this anecdote, the late earl of Orford declared his opinion that the papers had been either inadvertently destroyed by his elder brother, or stolen by a steward. Several letters belonging to this collection were given to the late lord Walpole, and are preserved at Wolterton. Notwithstanding these defalcations, the collection still contains many documents of high importance, of which I have availed myself.

To lord Orford I am highly indebted for numerous facts and anecdotes relating to Sir Robert Walpole, which nobody but himself could have authenticated. In gratefully acknowledging these favours, I feel it my duty to pay a just tribute to his candour. He repeatedly said, " You will remember that I am the son of Sir Robert Walpole, and therefore must be prejudiced in his favour. Facts I will not misrepresent or disguise, but my opinions and reflections on those facts you will receive with caution, and adopt or reject at your discretion." Although he testified a natural solicitude to see the memoirs of his father, yet he not unfrequently expressed his wishes that the work might not appear while he was alive, lest it might be thought that from motives of delicacy, I had not delivered my sentiments with freedom.

P R E F A C E.

TOWNSHEND PAPERS.

I am obliged to the marquis Townshend for access to the papers of his grandfather Charles, the second viscount Townshend, who was plenipotentiary at Gertruydenberg and at the Hague, and principal secretary of state. Lord Townshend's masterly letters to George the First; the notes between George the Second and him; the confidential intercourse which he regularly maintained with his brother in law, Sir Robert Walpole, while he was at Hanover; have materially contributed to illustrate those transactions in which the brother ministers had a principal share.

HARDWICKE PAPERS.

To my noble friend the earl of Hardwicke, I gratefully acknowledge my obligations for the use of his collection. From it I have been supplied with various papers, memorandums, and narratives of his grandfather, the lord chancellor, and of the late earl of Hardwicke's letters from the duke of Newcastle; the confidential correspondence between Sir Robert Walpole and lord Townshend, and the papers of Sir Luke Schaub, together with other documents of importance.

SYDNEY PAPERS.

I am indebted to lord Sydney for the communication of letters which belonged to his father, the honourable Thomas Townshend, second son of Charles viscount Townshend, and the confidential friend of Sir Robert Walpole. The kindness of lord Sydney, and his brother, Charles Townshend, Esquire, has also supplied many anecdotes derived from the conversation of their father.

WALDEGRAVE PAPERS.

To the Countess of WALDEGRAVE, I am obliged for submitting to my inspection the dispatches of her grandfather James, first

earl of Waldegrave, during his embassies at Vienna and Paris, from 1727 to 1740. Among other points of secret history, they detail many interesting conversations with Cardinal Fleury, and with Chauvelin, keeper of the seals. They contain also various letters to and from Sir Robert Walpole, of the most private and confidential nature, which are printed in the Correspondence.

In addition to these, I have to enumerate other communications made in the most liberal and obliging manner, and to offer my grateful acknowledgments :

HARRINGTON PAPERS.

To the earl of Harrington, for the correspondence of his grandfather William Stanhope, first earl of Harrington, who was envoy and ambassador at Madrid, plenipotentiary at the congress of Soissons, and secretary of state. Also for some papers of Charles Stanhope, elder brother of the first earl of Harrington, who was private and confidential secretary to earl Stanhope, and secretary to the treasury under the earl of Sunderland. This collection supplied me with many interesting letters, which relate to the schism in the administration in 1716, and a confidential correspondence between Newcastle and Harrington, previous to the dismissal of lord Townshend.

GRANTHAM PAPERS.

To lady Grantham, for the papers of Sir Thomas Robinson, first lord Grantham, who was confidential secretary to lord Walpole, during his embassy in France, and envoy and plenipotentiary at Vienna. These documents comprise an interesting account of the negotiations and transactions between Great Britain and the house of Austria, during a period of eighteen years.

POYNTZ PAPERS.

To Stephen Poyntz, Esquire, for various communications from the papers of his father Stephen Poyntz, Esquire, confidential secretary of lord Townshend, envoy to the court of Sweden, and one of the plenipotentiaries at the congress of Soissons.

KEENE PAPERS.

To Benjamin Keene, Esquire, for the papers of his uncle Sir Benjamin Keene, so long, and with such distinguished eminence, envoy and embassador at Madrid.

CAMPBELL PAPERS.

To Archibald Campbell, Esquire, for the papers of his grandfather, Archibald earl of Ilay, and duke of Argyle; in which I had the good fortune to find several original letters of Sir Robert Walpole.

DEVONSHIRE PAPERS.

To the late worthy and much regretted lord John Cavendish for several interesting letters, in the possession of the duke of Devonshire, written by Sir Robert Walpole, the marquis of Hartington, and Sir Robert Wilmot, to William duke of Devonshire, lord lieutenant of Ireland, a short time previous to the resignation of Sir Robert Walpole.

ETOUGH PAPERS.

To John Plumtre, Esquire, for the papers of the Rev. H. Etough, rector of Therfield, Hertfordshire. These papers form a valuable mass of intelligence. They contain sketches of the reigns of William, Anne, George the First and Second; numerous accounts of Sir Robert Walpole, which he obtained in conversation either from the minister himself or Horace Walpole, the minutest

which, in various instances, he noted down. They comprife much information derived from Mr. Scrope, fecretary to the treasury, and other perfons whose authorities he constantly cites; and a long and interefling correſpondence with Horace Walpole. Etough was a man of great reſearch and eager curioſity, replete with prejudice, but idolizing Sir Robert Walpole. In the examination of theſe ample documents, I have only adopted ſuch parts as were in my judgment entitled to full credit.

The following are the principal articles in this collection, of which I have availed myſelf: “A Miſcellany, being Minutes of ſeveral Converſations while Sir Robert Walpole, and when Lord Orford, on ſeveral Subjects, from 1734 to 1744, with ſome Particulars relating to his lateſt Tranſactions.”——“Minutes of a Converſation with Sir Robert Walpole, on the Attempt of Lord Bolingbroke and the Duchefs of Kendal, to obtain his Diſmiſſion in 1727.” Printed in the Correſpondence.——“An imperfect Eſſay on the Character and Behaviour of the late Earl of Orford, addreſſed to the right honourable Horatio Walpole, Eſquire.”——“Minutes of two Conferences with Horatio Walpole at Putney, Auguſt 6th and 20th, 1752.”——“Minutes of a Converſation with the right honourable Horace Walpole, Eſquire, November 3, 1755.”——“Observations on the Elections in 1734 and 41, relative to lord Orford.”——“Minutes of a Converſation with Mr. Scrope, ſecretary to the Treasury, relating to the Arrangement of the new Miniſtry on the Acceſſion of George the Second.” Printed in the Correſpondence.

WESTON PAPERS.

To the Rev. Charles Weſton, prebendary of Durham, for communications from the papers of his father, Edward Weſton, Eſquire, under ſecretary of ſtate; containing, among other interefling particulars, letters from Sir Robert Walpole and lord Townſhend, on the arrival

arrival of the duke of Ripperda in England, and a manly remonstrance of lord Townshend to the king, dissuading the journey to Hanover, which the reader will find in the Correspondence.

ONslow PAPERS.

To lord Onslow, for some very interesting remarks of speech, Onslow, on various parts of Sir Robert Walpole's conduct, with anecdotes of the principal leaders of opposition. Printed in the Correspondence.

ASTLE PAPERS.

To Thomas Astle, Esquire, keeper of the records at the Tower, for various communications from his private collection of manuscripts, particularly, correspondence of the earl of Clarendon, during his mission at Hanover, and letters from secretary St. John to Drummond; which are printed in the Correspondence.

STANHOPE PAPERS.

The schism in the Whig administration divided Walpole and Stanhope, and converted their long established friendship into bitterness and enmity. As the character of James, first earl of Stanhope, was severely arraigned by Townshend and Walpole, candour impelled me to apply to his representative, the present earl, for any documents in his possession, which might tend to vindicate his memory from the aspersions. This request was acceded to in the most liberal manner, and those papers have materially tended to elucidate the transactions of that period.

MIDDLETON PAPERS.

I am indebted to lord Middleton for the papers of his grandfather, the chancellor of Ireland, which develop the history of Walpole's administration.

patent, and comprise several letters from his brother Thomas Brodrick, chairman of the committee of secrecy in the South Sea inquiry, and of his son Saint John Brodrick ; most of these are replete with the severest sarcasms and invectives against the minister.

EGREMONT PAPERS.

To the earl of Egremont, for the letters of lord Bolingbroke to his grandfather Sir William Wyndham, remarkable for that animation, elegance of style, plausibility of argument, and virulence of invective, which distinguish his writings. They contain the most severe animadversions on the conduct and principles of Sir Robert Walpole, and are filled with the most bitter reproaches against his measures : I have thought it my duty not to suppress a single paragraph which reflected on the administration of the minister.

PULTENEY PAPERS.

To Sir William Pulteney, for the papers of his wife's father Daniel Pulteney, who was commissioner of the board of trade, lord of the admiralty, who became the strenuous opponent of Sir Robert Walpole, and wrote against him with great severity in the " Craftsman."

MELCOMBE PAPERS.

To Henry Penruddocke Wyndham, Esquire, for the papers of George Dodington, Lord Melcombe, from which I have selected several private letters, animadverting, with much acrimony, on the conduct and system of Sir Robert Walpole, extolling the principles and directing the views of that opposition which drove him from the helm.

To Dr. Douglas, bishop of Salisbury, I am indebted for several interesting particulars, derived from daily conversations, during an intimate intercourse of many years with his friend and patron the earl of Bath. While I gratefully acknowledge my obligations to this learned and highly-respected prelate, for much valuable information during the progress of this work, I feel extraordinary gratification in reflecting that the Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole have derived assistance from the friend of his great opponent, William Pulteney.

Governor Pownall claims my grateful acknowledgments for the communication of a very ingenious and able essay on the conduct and principles of Sir Robert Walpole, which places the minister in a new point of view. It is inserted in the Correspondence.

With the assistance of these extensive sources of information, I have been enabled to elucidate many parts of secret history, either totally unknown, or wholly misrepresented, and to trace the motives of action which influenced the conduct of the minister, and directed the views of the British cabinet.

I have not been biased by the prejudices of party hatred or party affection. I have always considered the connections and principles of the persons from whom I derived political information, and after duly weighing all the circumstances, have equally avoided the extremes on either side.

It has naturally been my principal object to trace and discuss those events, which personally relate to Sir Robert Walpole, either in his public or private character, and in which he was either directly or eventually concerned. In the course of my inquiries, and in the perusal of the numerous documents to which I have had access, I obtained information of various collateral circumstances, and
of

of numerous characters, which though they did not immediately attach to the life of the minister, yet were connected with the transactions which he either influenced or directed. Hence I have been led to make occasional digressions, in order to elucidate interesting but obscure points of history. I have also introduced biographical memoirs of eminent persons, who were either the opposers or favourers of the minister, whose characters the papers and documents in my possession have enabled me to illustrate.

Fully aware of the uncertainty of tradition, I have been extremely cautious to confine myself to the narrowest limits. I have never once adopted the hearsay of a hearsay, and have paid no attention to any anecdotes or facts except from those who derived their information from persons of veracity, that were themselves engaged in the transactions of the times, and who authenticated their narratives.

I have, in general, quoted my authorities, and though in some instances I have omitted to enumerate them, that I might avoid the appearance of affectation, yet I can safely aver, that I have not advanced a single fact in the whole work, of the truth of which I have not been convinced by the most unexceptionable evidence.

In a few instances I have collected the substance of the minister's speeches from parliamentary minutes in his own hand writing. From these memorandums I have particularly drawn his speeches against the peerage bill, on proposing the excise scheme, in opposing Sir John Barnard's plan for the reduction of interest, and in reply to the motion made by Sandys to remove him.

I have scrupulously avoided all allusions to the transactions which are now passing before us, lest I might have been tempted to make my work the vehicle of panegyric or invective, and have fallen into an error not uncommon with speculative writers, who judge of remote facts by recent circumstances, and affectedly allu-

mulate

milate the events of past ages with the transactions of the present day.

I cannot close this Preface without paying a just tribute of gratitude to my ingenious friend Mr. Adolphus, for the advantages which I have derived from his literary assistance in preparing these Memoirs for the press.

March 10, 1798.

M E M O I R S
O F
SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

PERIOD THE FIRST:

From his Birth, to the Accession of GEORGE the First;

1676—1714.

CHAPTER THE FIRST: 1676—1701.

*Family. — Birth. — Talents. — Education. — Country Pursuits. — Marriage. —
Paternal Estate.*

THE ancestors of Sir Robert Walpole, who was the eighteenth male of his family, in a lineal descent, may be traced from the conquest. They took their surname, according to the custom of those days, from the town of Walpole, in Norfolk, on the borders of Lincolnshire, where they had their residence, until one of them exchanged the family seat for Houghton, in the same county*.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.
FAMILY.

Sir Edward Walpole, his grandfather, was elected member for the borough of Lynn Regis, in the convention parliament, assembled in April 1660, and voted for the restoration of Charles the Second. As a recompence for his zeal in the royal cause, he was created Knight of the Bath. He was remarkable for his eloquence and weight in parliament, and once, on a warm altercation in the house, he suggested an expedient which was immediately adopted by both

* Annexed Genealogical Table. Edmonson's Baronegium. Collins's Peerage; Article, Earl of Orford. Documents among the Orford Papers.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

parties, for which Waller the poet, in a high strain of panegyric, ironically proposed that he should be sent to the Tower, for not having sooner composed the dispute when he had it in his power *. He died in 1667.

Robert, the eldest son and heir of Sir Edward Walpole, sat in parliament for the borough of Castle Rising, in the county of Norfolk, from the year of William and Mary, till his decease in November 1700. He was elected deputy lieutenant, and colonel of the militia, in the county of Norfolk, and took as active a share as his situation and circumstances permitted in warding the Revolution. He considerably improved his estate by his prudent management; educated a large family with much credit, and was in great estimation by the Whig party, whose measures he appears to have uniformly supported. He had by his wife Mary, only daughter and heiress of Sir Jeffery Burwell, of Rougham, in Suffolk, nineteen children, of whom Robert, afterwards Sir Robert Walpole †, and Earl of Orford, the subject of these Memoirs, was the third son.

It seems to be an error not uncommon in mankind, to endeavour to estimate the merit of favourite and eminent characters, by false and exaggerated eulogiums, and to attribute solely to nature, what is usually the combined effect of nature, education, and accident. The voice of friendship, admiration, and flattery, has declared, with a similar prejudice, that Sir Robert Walpole was born a minister. It was said of him, that he was endowed with a genius for calculation; and that the method which he adopted in settling his accounts, was a mystery understood only by himself. Others of his admirers considered application in him as not necessary, because he knew every thing by intuition. But truth and impartiality reject such unqualified assertions, and the events of his early life will shew that the natural talents of Walpole were rather solid than brilliant, and that his acquirements were the fruit of considerable industry.

He received an excellent education. He came early into parliament, and spoke at first indifferently, until habit and practice rendered him an able debater. He was promoted to an office in the admiralty in the 28th year of his age; became secretary at war at thirty; was trained to business under Marlborough and Godolphin; and managed the house of commons during the Whig administration. Being deprived of his place, he distinguished himself in opposition; was persecuted by the Tories, and considered as a martyr by the Whigs. He promoted, with unabated zeal, the Protestant succession, and was rewarded for his services with the place of paymaster of the forces.

* *Ædes Walpolianæ.*

† The early traits in the life of Sir Robert Walpole, were principally communicated by his son Horace, the late earl of Orford.

nts of Sir ROBERT WALPOLE.

WALPOLE,

HORATIO WALPOLE, GALFRIDUS,
1678. d. 1757. b. 1683,
Baron WALPOLE d. 1726.
of Wolterton,
Mary Lombard,
of Peter Lombard, Esq.
Wolterton, Norfolk.

HORATIO,
WALPOLE of Wolterton,
succeeded as
WALPOLE of Walpole, 1797,
of Horatio, 4th Earl of
Walpole in 1797.

ROBERT.

the new sovereign, whom he had assisted in fixing upon the throne. Thus educated and inured to business, having thus served under government, and acted in opposition, he was placed at the head of the treasury. In this situation, adored by his family, beloved by his friends, and esteemed by his party, he was courted and idolized. His facility for transacting business, and his talents for calculation, were considered by his fond admirers as the gift of nature, when, in reality, they were the result of education, assiduity, and experience.

Robert Walpole was born at Houghton on the 26th of August 1676 *. BIRTH.

* There is great confusion, and difference of opinion, with regard to the age of Sir Robert Walpole. He himself writes, in his letter to general Churchill, June 24th 1743; "No disgrace attends me since *Sixty-seven*." According therefore to this account he must have been born in 1675, and died aged 69, or in his 70th year. His son Horace, the late Earl of Orford, confirmed this account, and told me that, had he lived till the 26th of August 1745, he would have been 70.—The register at Houghton gives no account of his birth or time of baptism; but his death is thus recorded: A. D. 1745. The right honourable earl of Orford died March 18, and was buried the 25th, in the 68th year of his age.—At the bottom of the same page, in another hand, is, "The

great Sir Robert Walpole, earl of Orford, departed this life the 18th March 1745, aged "68 Years, and was interred the 25 D^o."—According to Collins's Peerage, and the Gentleman's Magazine, he was 71 at the time of his death, which would place his birth in 1674.—The register of his birth by his mother settles the dispute. The reverend Horace Hammond, rector of Great Massingham, in Norfolk, great nephew to Sir Robert Walpole, to whom I am obliged for the abovementioned extracts from the parish register, favoured me with an account of the births of all the children of Robert and Mary Walpole, registered in her own hand, in a book which is in his possession.

AGE OF MY CHILDREN.

Susan was born	-	-	-	6th June	-	-	-	1672.
Mary	—	-	-	8th June	-	-	-	1673.
Edward	—	-	-	23d June	-	-	-	1674.
Burwell	—	-	-	6th August	-	-	-	1675.
ROBERT	—	-	-	26th August	-	-	-	1676.
John	—	-	-	3d September	-	-	-	1677.
Horatio	—	-	-	8th December	-	-	-	1678.
Christopher	—	-	-	20th February	-	-	-	1679.
Elizabeth	—	-	-	24th March	-	-	-	1680.
Elizabeth	—	-	-	16th October	-	-	-	1682.
Galfridus	—	-	-	15th March	-	-	-	1683.
Anne	—	-	-	6th April	-	-	-	1685.
Dorothy	—	-	-	18th September	-	-	-	1686.
Susan	—	-	-	5th December	-	-	-	1687.
Mordaunt	—	-	-	13th December	-	-	-	1688.
A boy still-born	-	-	-	8th April	-	-	-	1690.
Charles	-	-	-	30th June	-	-	-	1691.
William	—	-	-	7th April	-	-	-	1693.
A daughter still-born	-	-	-	20th January	-	-	-	1694.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.
1689.

EDUCATION.

He received the first rudiments of learning at a private seminary at Maffham, in Norfolk, and completed his education on the foundation at Eton under Mr. Newborough, who appears to have been distinguished for knowledge, and to have raised the school to a high degree of eminence. Walpole was naturally indolent, and disliked application, but the emulation of a public seminary, the alternate menaces and praises of his master, the maxim repeatedly inculcated by his father, that he was a young man's brother, and that his future fortune in life depended solely upon his own exertions, overcame the original inertness of his disposition. Before he quitted Eton, he had so considerably improved himself in classical literature

as to bear the character of an excellent scholar. A peculiar fondness for Horace *, marked his good sense, and even after his retirement from public life, when he had long discontinued his early studies, he was by no means deficient in the knowledge of the Greek language. His talents for oratory began to develop themselves at a very early period, for his school-masters being informed that several of his former scholars who had been educated at Eton, and particularly St. John, had distinguished themselves for their eloquence in the house of commons, replied, "But I am impatient to hear what Robert Walpole has spoken, for I am convinced that he will be a good orator."

On the 22d of April 1696 †, he was admitted a scholar at King's ‡ College in the university of Cambridge. During his residence, he was seized with the small-pox, which was of a most malignant sort; and he continued for some time in imminent danger. Doctor Brady, the famous historical advocate of the Tory principles of the English constitution, who was his physician, and one of the fellows of King's College, warmly attached to the same party, said, "We must take care to save this young man, or we shall be accused of having purposely neglected him, because he is so violent a Whig." It was indeed principally owing to his kind and assiduous attention, that Walpole recovered. Notwithstanding Brady's political prejudices, he was so much pleased with the spirit and disposition of his young patient, that he observed with an affectionate attachment, "His singular escape seems to me a sufficient indication that he is reserved for important purposes." In the latter part of his life, when the prediction had been fulfilled, this anecdote was frequently related by Walpole with a complacency, which shewed that it had made

* He was accustomed to give his son, the late earl of Orford, subjects for his Latin compositions, and he almost always took them from Horace. Lord Orford used to recollect two themes which were applicable to his situation as first minister :

*Principibus placuisse viris non ultima laus est.
Non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum.*

† Register of King's College.

‡ A collection being made, after his death, for the new building at King's College, he subscribed £. 500, and on receiving the thanks of the provost and fellows, replied, "I deserve no thanks, I have only done my duty for my board."

deep impresson on his mind, and proved his satisfaction at the recollection of an event that seemed to anticipate his subsequent elevation.

Chapter 1.
1676 to 1701.

At college he formed a strict intimacy with Hare and Bland, who were members of the same foundation, and in every situation of life, shewed an affectionate regard for the friends of his early youth. He raised Hare, who afterwards ably distinguished himself in defending the measures of the Whig administration, to the bishopric of Chichester, and promoted Bland to the provostship of Eton College, and deanery of Durham.

On the death of his elder surviving brother, in 1698, becoming heir to the paternal estate, he resigned his scholarship on the 25th of May. He had been originally designed for the church, and was frequently heard to say, with the confidence which characterises an aspiring mind, that if such a destination had taken place, instead of being prime minister, he should have been archbishop of Canterbury. Fortunately the superstructure of his education was made before the death of his elder brother, for after that event he relapsed into his natural indolence, and, the impulse of necessity being removed, no longer continued to prosecute his studies for the purpose of pursuing a liberal profession. His father also assisted in withdrawing him from literary occupations. He immediately took his son from the university, endeavoured to fix him in the country, and make him attend to the improvement of his estate: with that view he employed him once a week in superintending the sale of his cattle at the neighbouring towns, and seemed ambitious that his son should become the first grazier in the county. His father was of a jovial disposition, and often pushed to excess the pleasures of the table: the hospitable mansion of Houghton was much frequented by the neighbouring gentry, and the convivial temper of Walpole accorded with the scenes of rustic jollity. At these meetings the father occasionally supplied his glass with a double portion of wine, adding, "Come Robert, you shall drink twice, while I drink once; for I will not permit the son, in his sober senses, to be witness to the intoxication of his father." His mornings being thus engaged in the occupations of farming, or in the sports of the field, of which he was always extremely fond, and his evenings passed in festive society, he had no leisure for literary pursuits.

PATERNAL
ESTATE.

On the 30th of July 1700, he married, in Knightsbridge Chapel *, Catherine, daughter of Sir John Shorter, lord mayor of London, a woman of exquisite beauty and accomplished manners, and the amusements of London succeeded the more active employments of the country. Soon after

Nov. 28.
1700.

* Register of Knightsbridge Chapel, which the reverend D. Lysons, the learned author of the Environs of London, was so obliging as to search at my request.

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1676 to 1714.

the marriage his father died, and Walpole inherited the family estate, the rent-roll of which exceeded £. 2,000 a year*. It was charged with his father's jointure, and with the fortunes of the younger children, which amounted to £. 9,000. His wife's dowry discharged this incumbrance, and his mother's jointure fell in by her death in 1711.

The death of his father threw him into the busy scenes of public life, the violent spirit of party gave an impulse to his political exertions; at the moment when the demise of Charles the Second, king of Spain, fixed the attention of Europe, and excited general apprehensions in England, lest the united dominions of the whole Spanish monarchy should center in a prince of the house of Bourbon.

* Among the Orford Papers is a document in the hand-writing of his father, shewing the amount of the estate, of which the substance is submitted to the reader, as a proof that the reproaches cast upon him by his opponents, of being a needy adventurer, were unfounded.

June 9, 1700. A particular of my estate within the county of Norfolk, as it is now

	£.	s.	d.
Manor of Houghton	352	11	—
Manor of Birch Newton	80	—	—
Manor of Great Bircham	277	—	—
Manor of Bircham Toft	101	—	—
of Darlington	253	11	4
of Sislem	304	16	8
of Westwich	180	10	—
of Glostnops in Ledgett	100	—	—
of Harply	100	11	—
In Burrough, near Yarmouth	18	—	—
Small lands and tenements	50	—	—
Total in Norfolk	1,818	—	—
In Suffolk.			
Manor of Haffet	300	—	—
Farm of Cavendish, &c.	51	—	—
Total	2,169	—	—

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1700—1701.

Elected Member of Parliament.—Sketch of the important Transactions during the Two last Parliaments of King William.—Act of Settlement in favour of the Protestant Succession and Family.—Principles and Conduct of the Leaders at the Revolution.—Ineffectual Endeavour of William to extend the Act of Settlement in favour of the Hanover Line, virtually introduced by the Act for disabling Papists.—Artful Management of William to procure the Extension of that Act on the Death of the Duke of Gloucester.

ON the decease of his father, Walpole was elected member for Castle Rising, and sat for that borough in the two short parliaments, which were assembled in the two last years of the reign of king William.

Chapter 2.
1700 to 1701.

The death of Charles the Second, king of Spain, in the month of October 1700, the acceptance of his testament by Louis the Fourteenth, in breach of the second partition treaty, and the quiet accession of Philip duke of Anjou to the crown of Spain, acknowledged by England and the United Provinces, were events which had preceded the meeting of the parliament in which Walpole first sat. The act of settlement in favour of the electress Sophia; the violent conduct of the Tory house of commons in the impeachment of Somers and the Whig lords; the death of James the Second; the acknowledgment of his son as James the Third, by Louis the Fourteenth; the indignation of the English at that event; the successful manœuvres of William to rouse the spirit of the nation against France, and to obtain the concurrence of the Tories to a Continental war; the second grand alliance; the dissolution of the Tory parliament and ministry; the choice of a Whig administration and parliament; the declaration of war against France; the attainder of the pretended prince of Wales; the abjuration oath; the death of William, at the moment when he had infused an impulse into the grand combination; were the important events which agitated the public mind during the two last parliaments of his reign. To give a detail of these complicated and interesting transactions is not the province of a writer of memoirs, but must be left to the historian of the times; except so far as they may be supposed to influence the future conduct and policy of the minister, whose life I am attempting to delineate. With this view, it may not be improper to

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Period I.
1676 to 1714.

to state the circumstances which preceded and accompanied the passing of the act of settlement, and induced all parties, notwithstanding the avowed repugnance of a majority in the commons, to adopt that measure, which secured to the house of Hanover the throne of Great Britain, and thereby gave a strong and permanent influence on the subsequent conduct of Walpole.

When the arbitrary conduct of James the Second against the constitution and religion had raised the indignation of England, and when our great liberator William, the prince of Orange, had co-operated with the commons in driving that monarch from the throne; the leaders of the convention parliament, which established the revolution, acted with a spirit and wisdom well becoming the arduous situation of affairs, and with a temper which commodated itself, as occasion required, to the customs and prejudices of the nation. While they set aside that absolute and indefeasible right, which they averred no conduct, however tyrannical, could violate, and laid down the doctrine of resistance in cases of extreme necessity, they dreaded the evils of elective monarchy, and guarded against the future establishment of a republican form of government. When they found it necessary to break the hereditary line of descent, they made the deviation as small as possible, no greater than the exigency of circumstances required, and re-established it in the same manner as it existed before that breach was made. With these principles constantly in view, they declared that James, having endeavoured to subvert the constitution, had abdicated the government, and thereby rendered the throne vacant.

The throne being thus declared abdicated or vacant, by the absence of James the Second, and his son being supposed illegitimate, the next in order of succession was Mary, eldest daughter of James. But as the nation owed its deliverance from arbitrary power to William, the convention departed from the regular line by declaring him king, jointly with his wife Mary, and vesting in him the sole administration of government. This appointment was a deviation from the system of hereditary descent, dictated by immediate necessity, and confirmed by gratitude; yet as Mary and Anne both assented to devolve their right to the crown on William, the convention can be said only to have confirmed this transfer. This single deviation excepted, the succession was continued after the death of William and Mary in the natural order: in the children of Mary; in Anne; in the children of Anne; and in the children of William, who being the son of Mary, eldest daughter of Charles the First, was, after Anne, the next in order of succession*.

* Blackstone's Commentaries, Vol. I. page 212.

In 1689, the first parliament which was summoned by William and Mary confirmed this act of settlement; but the king, ever anxious to promote the tranquillity of his subjects, and to prevent those future troubles which might arise, should all the persons named in that Act die without issue, thought it indispensibly necessary to extend it to the next heirs in the Protestant line. He ordered, therefore, bishop Burnet to propose in the house of lords, the addition of an amendment to the bill of rights, nominating Sophia, dutchess of Hanover, and her issue, next in the succession. Being carried by the lords without opposition, it was thrown out in the house of commons by the Republicans, high Tories, and Jacobites, who all united on this occasion against a bill which equally confounded their respective hopes, under the specious pretence that such a nomination was unjust, because it would preclude all those who were prior in lineal descent to the dutchess, even should they become Protestants *. The birth of the duke of Gloucester, having still farther removed the apprehensions of a popish successor, William did not chuse to press the nation in favour of the Hanover line, but was satisfied in obtaining his views by a more concealed but not less effectual method. Instead of naming Sophia, a clause was annexed to the bill of rights, disabling all Papists from succeeding to the crown, or such as should marry Papists. This clause first opened the prospect of succession to the house of Brunswick, without naming it; because that family, being the first among the Protestant descendants of James the First, became, from the perpetual exclusion of Catholics, next in expectancy to the persons named in the act of settlement. This remarkable clause passed, in both houses, without opposition or debate, notwithstanding the well known disinclination of the majority of the lower house; and the management of the whole affair reflects the highest honour on the judgment and temper of William.

Such was the order of succession when Walpole came into parliament; at which time the recent death of the duke of Gloucester alarmed the nation with the dread of a Popish successor, and enabled William to carry into execution his favourite measure of extending the act of settlement to the house of Hanover. Having been deceived by Louis the Fourteenth in the negotiations for the second partition treaty, he had dismissed the Whig ministers, who had rendered themselves obnoxious by signing it, and formed a Tory administration, at the head of which were Rochester, Godolphin, and Harley, who, from being a violent partisan of the Whigs, now sided with their opponents.

* Burnet, vol. 2. p. 15. Tindal, vol. 13. p. 144.

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 1676 to 1714.

William well knew that the greater part of the Tories had contended with the utmost reluctance to the breach of hereditary descent a revolution, and had almost uniformly opposed his endeavours in favour of Sophia, as tending, in their opinion, to overturn the system of hereditary monarchy, so long cherished by the constitution of England. He well knew that the whole body of the real Whigs earnestly promoted the transfer of the crown to the succession in the Protestant line, but, at the same time, he was aware that among those who called themselves Whigs, many Republicans, who would oppose it, from a hope, that if the person named in the act of settlement should die, means might be found to establish their favourite form of government. He had long perceived that the Whigs themselves could never have carried the bill which he had much at heart, in opposition to the united force of the Tories, Jacobites and Republicans; but he had now divided the Republicans from the Tories by placing the latter in power, and being secure of the Whigs on the question, he thought it a favourable opportunity to make the extension of the act of settlement with the ministers the price of their elevation. He accordingly recommended, in his speech from the throne, February 17, 1701, further provision for the succession of the crown in the Protestant line; withstanding this acquiescence of the Tories, he could not carry his point without the consent of the princess Anne, who was at that time entirely governed by the dutchess of Marlborough; and the dutchess was highly incensed at William, for having formerly arrested the duke her husband, and still more for having publicly withdrawn his confidence from him. With a view therefore to counteract the influence of that artful favourite, and to gain the concurrence of Anne, he permitted insinuations to be thrown out, as if he intended to make a cession of his crown to the son of James the second. These artful rumours alarmed both the princess and her favourite, and she tortured her consent to the act of settlement.*

But although the Tories had promised the king to promote the extension of the Act of Settlement, before they came into power, and had even submitted a recommendation of it to be introduced into the king's speech, yet the method in which they conducted the business, proved their intention to obstruct it. The speech was made on the 11th of February; the commons, in their address, took not the least notice of that part which related to the Protestant succession; and it was not until the 3d of March that the house resolved itself into a committee to take that subject into consideration.

* Cunningham, vol. 1. p. 185. Somerville's History of King William, p. 545.

Harley observed, that the haste in which the government was settled at the revolution, had prevented the nation from requiring such securities from the future sovereign, as would have prevented much mischief; and he hoped they would not fall into the same error; he therefore moved, that before the person should be named, a provision should be made by a committee for the security of the rights and liberties of the people. This proposal being accepted, the resolutions of the committee were laid before the house, on the 12th of March, specifying certain restrictions *, to be ratified by every future sovereign.

Burnet, whose reflections on the Tories cannot be admitted without extreme caution, observes, that these limitations were designed to disgust the king, and to raise disputes between the two houses, by which the bill might be lost †; although some of these restrictions were just, and highly beneficial, this observation is fully justified by the subsequent proceedings of the commons. So many delays were still made, that the patience of the Whigs began to be exhausted, and one of their party was going to propose the electress Sophia. Harley could only prevent this measure by bringing on the question. With a view, however, to cast a ridicule on the act of settlement, he employed Sir John Bolles, who was disordered in his senses, to propose the bill ‡. The business was so contrived, that this man thus deranged in his intellects, was, by the forms of the house, appointed one of the committee who were instructed to prepare the bill, was twice placed in the chair, and twice gave in the report. The first reading was postponed to the

* 1. All things relating to the well governing of this kingdom which are properly cognizable in the privy council, by the laws and customs of this realm, shall be transacted there, and all resolutions taken thereupon shall be signed by such of the privy council as shall advise and consent to the same. 2. No person born out of the kingdoms of England, Scotland, or Ireland, or the dominions thereunto belonging, or who is not born of English parents beyond the seas, although naturalized or made a denizen, shall be capable to be of the privy council, or a member of either house of parliament, or to enjoy any office or place of trust. 3. No such person shall have any grant of lands, tenements, or hereditaments from the crown to himself, or to any others in trust for him. 4. In case the crown shall hereafter come to any person not being a native of the kingdom of England, this nation shall not be obliged to engage in any war for the defence of any dominions or territories not be-

longing to the crown of England, without the consent of parliament. 5. Whoever shall hereafter come to the possession of the crown, shall join in communion with the church of England. 6. No pardon under the great seal shall be pleadable to an impeachment in parliament. 7. No person who shall hereafter come to the possession of the crown, shall go out of the dominions of England, Scotland, or Ireland, without the consent of parliament. 8. No person who has an office or place of profit under the king, or receives a pension from the crown, shall be capable of serving as a member of the house of commons. Judge's commissions shall be made *quam diu se bene gesserint*, and their salaries ascertained and established: But, upon the address of both houses of parliament, it may be lawful to remove them.

Journals of the House of Commons.—Tindal.

† Vol. 2. p. 271.

‡ Burnet.—*Journals*.

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first of April, the second to the seventh, and it did not finally pass till the fourteenth of May. Thus the act of settlement, which was to secure religion and constitution of the country, was received with so much sneers and contempt, that several members, during the sitting of the commons, indecently quitted the house, and so many delays were purposely made, more than three months elapsed, from the day in which it was recommended from the throne to the time it was sent up to the lords. It passed that day after a slight opposition from the marquis of Normanby. Being carried to the commons, it was received in a thin house, and several reproachful expressions were uttered against it by some of the members*.

After such a conduct, apparently calculated to render the bill odious and contemptible, what thanks can be given to the Tories, and to their leader Harley, for having in this manner brought forwards the act of settlement? Is it not evident that they had been drawn into a promise to support the artful management of William, and that they endeavoured to countenance the bill at the very moment when they appeared to promote it? The zealous Whig, however, cannot presume to deny that the nation is highly indebted to the Tories for one of the limitations in the act of settlement, which the Whigs, with all their ardour for civil and religious liberty, would not have ventured to propose, because it was considered by the king as an insult on his conduct and administration. The restriction to which I allude is, that no foreigner, though naturalized, should be a member of the council, or of either house of parliament, or should enjoy any office or office of trust, or have any grant of lands from the crown. These necessary cautions, naturally suggested by the experience of those evils to which the nation had been already exposed, in consequence of raising a foreign prince to the throne, proved highly beneficial in preventing, on the accession of George the First, the admission of German denizens into the councils and cabinet of England.

* Burnet.—Tindal.—Oldmixon.

CHAPTER THE THIRD:

1701—1702.

Walpole soon becomes an active Member of Parliament.—Is upon various Committees, and Teller on several important Questions.—Supports the Whigs.—Second's the Motion for extending the Oath of Abjuration to ecclesiastical Persons.—Death and Character of King William..

ALTHOUGH neither the Journals of the House of Commons, nor any contemporary accounts, nor the traditions of his family, record that Walpole made any specific motion, or spoke in favour of the act of settlement, yet there is no doubt that he joined the Whigs in promoting it.

The Journals of the House of Commons prove, that he soon became a very active member. His name appears upon several committees, and in one for privileges and elections, so early as the 13th of February, only three days after the meeting of the parliament in which he first sat. He was particularly attentive to the business which related to the county of Norfolk; and zealously promoted the questions which concerned the trade of Norwich. He made the report from the committee on the bill for erecting hospitals and workhouses in the borough of Lynn, and for the better employing and maintaining the poor, and was ordered to carry it up to the house of lords.

He is also mentioned as teller on several important questions which related as well to the trade and revenues of England, as to questions of party. He was one of the tellers against the bill proposed by the Tories for the better preservation of the Protestant religion, and for preventing the translation of bishops from one see to another. His high veneration for the character of Lord Somers, and his zealous attachment to his party, naturally induced him to oppose the motion for his impeachment, and it is not improbable that he afterwards took a considerable part in his defence. Being young and unexperienced at the period when that question was moved, he gave only a silent vote, but he made a judicious remark, which proved his sagacity: it was, that the zeal of the warmest friends is oftentimes more hurtful to the person whose cause they espouse, than the bitterest accusations of the most inveterate opponents. The defence spoken by Somers in the house of commons was so able and perspicuous, and made so deep an impression, as induced Walpole to be of opinion, that if the question had been immediately put,

Chapter 3.
1701 to 1702.

1701.

April 23.

April 14.

the

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the prosecution would have been withdrawn. But the accusers of Somers, foreseeing this event, made such inconsistent observations, and such intemperate expressions, as provoked his friends to reply. According to the account of this debate, given by Walpole, Harcourt began with extremely fallacious, but as plausible remarks, as the subject could admit. Somers's indignation moved him to reply, which occasioned the prolongation of the debate, at the end of which, what had been significantly and fully said by Somers, was in a great measure forgotten. But had the impetuosity of his friends been restrained, and his enemies been permitted to proceed without interruption, as long as they thought fit, Walpole apprehended they would have not been able to divide the house *. He was one of the tellers in favour of the question, that the engrossed replication to the answer of Lord Somers to the articles of impeachment, should be read. On which motion, he divided with 90 against 140.

On entering into parliament, a due diffidence of his own powers repressed his zeal; and he formed a resolution not to speak until he had attained some experience, and some degree of parliamentary knowledge: but his pride and caution were overcome by the more powerful passion of emulation.

During his continuance at Eton, he had been the rival of St. John. St. John was three years older than himself. The parts of St. John were more impetuous and brilliant; those of Walpole more steady and solid. Walpole was industrious and diligent, because his talents required application. St. John was negligent, because his quickness of apprehension rendered less labour necessary. When both came into public life, this emulation did not cease, and as they took different parties, opposition kindled their zeal. St. John soon distinguished himself in the house of commons, and became an eloquent debater; repeated encomiums bestowed on his rival, roused the ardour of Walpole, and induced him to commence speaker sooner than he at first intended. It does not, however, appear at what time, or on what occasion he first spoke in the house of commons; all that is known on that subject is, that the first time he rose, he was confused and embarrassed, and did not seem to realize those expectations which his friends had fondly conceived. At the same time, another member made a studied speech, which was much admired. At the end of the debate, some persons casting a censure on Walpole as an indifferent orator, and expressing their approbation of the maiden speech made by the other member, Arthur Mainwaring.

* The general account of this debate is accurately stated in Tindal's Continuation of Rapin, by the author, Dr. Birch, on the express authority of Sir Robert Walpole himself.

I have added other particulars from the diary of Etough. He derived his information from a conference which he had with Sir Robert Walpole, October 21, 1724.

who was present, observed in reply, " You may applaud the one, and ridicule the other, as much as you please, but depend upon it, that the spruce gentleman who made the set speech will never improve, and that Walpole will in time become an excellent speaker *." The prediction of Mainwaring was soon verified. Walpole took a still more active part in the debates of the ensuing parliament, which met on the 30th of December 1701; which being composed of a majority of Whigs, and acting under a Whig administration, whom William had again called to the helm of government, was more congenial to his political opinions. Yet notwithstanding the preponderance of their interest, the Tories gained a victory in the choice of a speaker, of which lord Townshend takes notice in a letter to Walpole, who was detained at Houghton by the illness of his wife: " Mr. Harley has carried it from Sir Thomas Littleton, by a majority of four votes, which gives his party great encouragement, and is no small mortification to the Whigs. I am extremely sorry to hear my cousin has miscarried of a son, but I hope she is in no danger, and that we shall shortly have the happiness of seeing you here †." Walpole did not long delay taking his seat in the new parliament.

At this period, Louis the Fourteenth having, on the death of James the Second, acknowledged his son king of England, under the title of James the Third, William ordered his ambassador, the earl of Manchester, to quit France, and in a speech to the new parliament, told them, " He need not press them to lay seriously to heart, and to consider what further means might be used for securing the succession of the crown in the Protestant line, and extinguishing the hopes of all pretenders, and their open and secret abettors." Animated by this exhortation, the commons addressed the crown not to make peace with France, until reparation was made for the great indignity offered by the French king, in arming, and declaring the pretended prince of Wales king of England, Scotland and Ireland. The Whigs having now the power, abundantly testified their inclination to confirm the act of settlement by every means best calculated to favour the exclusion of the dethroned family. Accordingly, a bill for attainting the pretended prince of Wales, passed in both houses with little opposition. A bill also for the security of the king's person, for the succession of the crown in the Protestant line, and for extinguishing the hopes of the pretended prince of Wales, was carried with equal success. A clause in this bill, well known under the title of the act of abjuration, enjoined all subjects to swear allegiance to the king, by the title of *lawful* and *rightful* king, and his heirs, according to the act of settlement: this oath was to be

* From Charles Townshend, Esq.
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† December 30.—Orford Papers.

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 1676 to 1714. by two justices of the peace, to any person whom they should suspec-
 disaffection. Even this clause met with no opposition, and the great
 question was confined to the question, whether this oath should be compul-
 sory or free. The enemies of the Protestant succession could not venture
 to oppose the oath of abjuration, but they exerted their whole strength to
 render it null, by contending, that it ought not to be imposed by force,
 but left to the option of every person to take or to decline it. The contest
 on this occasion was so great, and the two parties so equal, that this impor-
 tant clause was only carried in a full house by one voice.

1688 to 1689.

This great victory being thus obtained, it was thought proper to extend
 the oath to all ecclesiastical persons, and members of the universities.
 Charles Hedges accordingly moved for an addition to the clause, which
 should comprehend all clergymen, fellows of colleges, and school-mas-
 ters. Horace Walpole having, during his residence at Cambridge, observed many instances
 where masters and fellows of colleges had never taken the oath of allegi-
 ance, seconded the motion for this amendment, and it was carried without
 division; so effectual was the triumph of the Whigs, over the friends
 of the dethroned family. Horace Walpole alludes to his conduct on
 this memorable occasion, in a letter from Cambridge*, in which he de-
 scribes the consternation of the nonjurors, on being compelled to take the
 oath of abjuration, and the indignation which they expressed against their
 brother, for his zeal in promoting the Protestant succession.

When the bill was moved in the house of lords, the Tories properly
 and warmly supported an additional amendment, excusing the peerage
 from the obligation of the oath. Nottingham particularly distinguished
 himself in its favour, and spoke with so much agitation, that the tears
 came from his eyes†. But the singular absurdity and injustice of exempting
 the upper house from the same strictness of engagements to which the
 lower house had consented, met with the fate which it deserved: The motion
 was negatived. Although the Tories could not carry their question,
 they succeeded in adding two amendments, with a view still farther to pro-
 long the business. The opponents of the Protestant succession in the lower house
 coincided with their intentions, for the bill sent down to the commons,
 with these amendments, was not returned to the lords till the 3d of March,
 and was there detained several days, and was not sent back to the commons

* Feb. 28, 1701-2. See Correspondence.

† Etough's Papers.

till the 7th, on a Saturday *, in the hope of deferring it till the Monday; and as the king then lay upon his death bed, almost at the last extremity, such a delay would have been fatal. But the precautions of William, and the vigilance of the Whigs defeated their well-laid scheme. The commons adjourned till six in the afternoon; in this interval, the king, who was so weak that he could not hold a pen in his hand, stamped his name to the commission for passing the acts. When the commons met, a message was brought from the lords, importing that the king had signed the commission, and desiring the house to come up. The speaker, accordingly, accompanied as usual with other members, went out, and returned with the report, that the royal assent had been given to the bill, and to two other acts. No event ever happened in a more critical moment; for William expired between eight and nine on the following morning. Thus the last exercise of his kingly power, was his assent to the oath of abjuration, emphatically styled, by the friends of the dethroned family, his *curfed legacy*. “Thus, observes a contemporary † author, he confirmed to posterity, with his expiring breath, that liberty, civil and religious, for which during his life he had so often fought in the field; which he was indefatigably augmenting and establishing in his parliament; which he was continually bringing to perfection in his councils, and which, on his accession to the throne, he promised (as he faithfully performed) to secure against all future attempts to subvert it.”

March 8.

* Journals of the Lords and Commons.

† Toland.

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1676 to 1714.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH:

1702—1710.

Accession of Anne.—Walpole makes a Motion in Opposition to Sir Edward Seymour.—Distinguishes himself in the Proceedings on the Aylesbury Election.—Noticed by Earl Godolphin, and the Duke of Marlborough.—Appointed one of the Seven Council to the Lord High Admiral—Secretary at War—Treasurer to the Navy.—Nominated one of the Managers for the House of Commons, upon the Prosecution of Sacheverel.—His Speech, and Publication on that Occasion.

IN the first parliament of queen Anne, Walpole was returned for Lynn where his family had long possessed a permanent interest. For this borough he was regularly chosen, until he was created earl of Orford.

Supports the
Whigs.

Although he had spoken frequently in the house of commons, yet the first time in which he appears upon record, on a public * question, in the parliamentary debates, was on the 23d of December 1702, when Sir Edward Seymour having carried a resolution to bring in a bill for the resumption of the grants made in the reign of king William, and applying them to the service of the Public; Walpole moved, that all the grants made in the reign of that king James, should also be resumed; but his motion was negatived †. The proposition of Sir Edward Seymour, directed against the Whigs, who had received the principal grants from king William, was supported by a Tory ministry, and easily passed through a Tory parliament; and the counter motion by so young a member, levelled against the grants made to the Tories in opposition to one of their great leaders, sufficiently proved that Walpole was rising into consequence, and had decidedly enlisted himself under the banner of the Whigs ‡.

* Notitia Parliam.—Lists of the House of Commons in Chandler's Proceedings of Parliament.

† Journals of the House of Commons. Tindal, v. 15, p. 474.

‡ As a proof of Walpole's activity, and an indication of the principles and party which he supported, I have extracted, from the Journals of the House of Commons, the several ques-

tions in which he was teller, besides the already mentioned, until he was appointed secretary at war.

1702.—February 19th.—Against a motion to be added to a bill, for the further securing his majesty's person and government, that persons who take upon them offices, shall part from the communion of the church of England.—February 26th.—Against d

In the celebrated cause concerning the Aylesbury election, Walpole distinguished himself in an eminent degree, and attained an high estimation with his party. Complaints of great partiality and injustice in the election of members of parliament, had been continually urged against the sheriffs in the counties, and returning officers in the boroughs, who often found pretexts for rejecting those electors who voted against the members they espoused. When these disputes were brought before the commons, the house seldom entered into the merits of the cause, but usually decided in favour of the candidate who voted with the majority. It was no easy matter to apply a remedy for such a glaring abuse; because all parties, when oppressed, made heavy complaints, and when certain of a majority forgot the grievance against which they had before so loudly exclaimed, and even excused themselves on the necessity of retaliation. At length, after many attempts to obtain justice, Ashby, a freeman, prosecuted William White, constable of Aylesbury, for having refused to admit his vote at the election of burgesses. A verdict, with damages, was found in favour of Ashby, but

Chapter 4.
1702 to 1710.
1704.
January.
Aylesbury
Case.

to read the report of a committee, to consider further of the rights, liberties, and privileges of the house of commons.—March 3d.—In favour of a motion for an instruction to a committee on the bill for granting to his majesty divers subsidies.—1703.—January 5th.—For an amendment to an address, in reply to the queen's message.—1704.—November 14th.—Against leave to bring in a bill for preventing occasional conformity.—December 14th.—Against the said bill.—December 19th.—Against an instruction to a committee, that they have power to receive a clause for the qualification of justices of the peace, in a bill for the better recruiting her majesty's land forces, and the marines.—1705.—January 16th.—For a motion, that a bill be committed for appointing commissioners to treat of an union between England and Scotland, &c.—January 17th.—For a question, that towards the supply, a duty be laid upon all goods imported from the East Indies, Persia, and China, into England, prohibited to be used in England, and from thence to be exported to Ireland, or any of the plantations.—January 27th.—Against a bill, to prevent persons who are entitled by their offices to receive any benefit by public annual taxes, from being members of parliament, while they are in such offices.—February 21st.—For an amendment in a bill for prohibiting all trade and com-

merce with France.—March 14th.—Against a clause in an act for preventing the further growth of popery.—December 8th.—Against a motion for a committee to consider of the resolution of the lords, declaring those who should insinuate the church to be in danger, enemies to the queen, the church, and the kingdom.—December 19th.—For the second reading of a bill, for better security of her majesty's person and government, and the succession in the Protestant line.—1706.—February 4th.—For an amendment made by the lords in the same bill.—February 13th.—Against a clause to prevent irregular lifting of men, to be added to the bill for recruiting the army and marines.—1707.—February 10th.—For an amendment to a bill for securing the church of England, as by law established.—February 22d.—Against a motion for an instruction to the committee on the Bill of Union, that the subjects of this kingdom shall be for ever free from any oath, test, or subscription, within this kingdom, contrary to or inconsistent with the true Protestant religion of the church of England, as is already provided for the subjects of Scotland, with respect to their Presbyterian government.—December 12th.—For an amendment to the above bill.—1708.—January 29th.—For the adjournment of a debate on the English forces in the service of Spain and Portugal, in 1707.

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reversed by the court of Queen's Bench. The cause being carried by a majority to the house of lords, the order of the Queen's Bench was set aside, and the verdict given at the assizes confirmed. The Tories, who formed the majority of the commons, considering these proceedings as an encroachment on their privileges, and esteeming that house the judge of such questions as related to the election of its members, the solicitor-general, Sir Simon Harcourt, moved, "That the sole right of examining and determining all matters relating to the election of members to serve in parliament, except in such cases as are otherwise provided for by an act of parliament, is in the house of commons; and that neither the qualification of the electors, or the right of persons elected, is elsewhere cognizable or determinable." The question was debated with uncommon vehemence and ability; on the side of the Tories principally by Harley, St. John, Harcourt, and Sir Edward Seymour; on the side of the Whigs, by Sir Joseph Jekyll, Cowper, King, the marquis of Hartington, and Walpole. He took a short, but sensible part in the debate, and after arguing with much judgment against the motion, proposed to amend that part of it which concerned the qualification of the electors. His amendment, seconded by the marquis of Hartington, was negatived by a majority of only eighteen, and the original question carried.

Yet, although the Whigs were defeated, their arguments produced a great effect on the public mind. A general discontent prevailed against the proceedings of the commons, for committing to Newgate Ashby, and four other dissenting inhabitants of Aylesbury, who had likewise sued the returning officers; for preventing their having a Habeas Corpus, and for addressing the queen to permit a motion for a writ of error in the house of lords, which would have released them from prison, and for declaring all solicitors and council liable should prosecute or plead in any such cause, guilty of a high breach of privilege. The final decision of this important controversy was suspended by the perseverance of the lords, who declared, that a writ of error was a matter of right, not of grace; by the steady determination of the queen not to be instructed, in favour of the house of commons, the course of judicial procedure in the courts of law; and by the manly opposition of lord chief justice Holt. These contrary pretensions produced a violent quarrel between the two houses, which was terminated by the dissolution of parliament*. Although the question was never revived, yet from this time, the house of commons considered itself as the sole judge of the qualifications of electors, and of other matters which related to the return of members. It was principally

* See Journals of the Lords and Commons.—Raymond's Reports, p. 938.—Proceedings in the great case of Ashby and White, and in the case of the Aylesbury men.—Chandler.—

owing to these resolutions, that the decisions, in regard to controverted elections, were seldom regulated by the merits of the case, but became questions of personal or political expediency; nor was this abuse corrected, until the act, known by the name of Grenville's Bill, referred to a committee, chosen by ballot, and acting upon oath, the final decision in all contested elections.

At this period of his life, Walpole began to be held in high estimation by the great leaders of the Whigs, and was particularly noticed by the duke of Devonshire, the earl of Sunderland, lord Halifax, and lord Somers. Among the persons of his own age, with whom he entered into habits of close intimacy, were James, afterwards earl Stanhope, Spencer Compton, afterwards earl of Wilmington, the marquis of Hartington, eldest son of the duke of Devonshire, whose family uniformly proved themselves his firm friends and adherents, and viscount Townshend, who was then just beginning to acquire political importance. But Walpole owed his rise and consequence less to his connections, than to his own talents and situation. A member of parliament of a great Whig family, whose interest brought in three * representatives, and who had distinguished himself in the debates for sound sense, manly argument, and perspicuous eloquence, could not long remain unnoticed. Nor was his reputation solely confined to the party whose cause he so warmly espoused. The lord treasurer Godolphin †, at a period when a Whig was his aversion, discerned his rising abilities, favoured him with his immediate protection, and strongly recommended him to the patronage of the Duke of Marlborough.

The firm adherence of Walpole to his party, was, however, a hindrance to his preferment, as long as Godolphin continued to act solely with the Tories; but no sooner had the leaders of the Whigs regained their lost popularity, and appeared secure of a majority in the ensuing parliament, than the lord treasurer brought several into office, and opened to others a prospect of preferment. The duke of Newcastle was declared privy seal, in the room of the marquis of Normanby; and among the inferior places of government, Walpole was appointed one of the council ‡ to prince George of Denmark, lord high admiral of England. This first service was attended with many disagreeable circumstances: Great mismanagement, both at home and at sea, was imputed to the navy board. Admiral Churchill, brother to the duke of Marlborough, possessed, at this period, the greatest influence at the admiralty, and was accused, with some of the other members, of negligence and corruption.

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(1770.)

Highly
esteemed by
his party.

Noticed by
Godolphin.

1705.

March 1705.
Appointed
one of the
council to
the lord high
admiral.
June.

* Two for Castle Rising, and one for Lynn Regis.

† From the late earl of Orford.—Etough's Summary Account of Sir Robert Walpole.

‡ Walpole Papers.—MS. account of Sir Robert Walpole, in King's College, Cambridge.—Collins's Peerage.

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To him the merchants attributed their losses; their loud complaints were in both houses, and zealously supported by the principal Whigs. Walpole deavoured to excuse and mitigate the conduct of the council, and gave a of the spirit that marked the decision of his character. Being reproached one of his friends for acting against his party, he replied, "I never can mean to sit at a board, when I cannot utter a word in its defence *." although he conceived, that it was unbecoming in him not to defend with whom he sat in council, and although he well knew that their faults had been exaggerated, yet he found sufficient abuses to call for immediate correction. He laboured therefore to prove to the board, the necessity of assuming a more decisive conduct; and he so far ingratiated himself with his fellow counsellors †, that his advice was followed, and his plans were universally adopted.

The union of spirit and prudence, in so young a man, still farther recommended him to the notice of Godolphin, who appears to have placed in him the most implicit confidence, and to have availed himself of his advice and assistance on many important occasions.

1705.
October.
New parliament.

At the meeting of the new parliament, Walpole seconded the motion made by lord Granby, to nominate Smith speaker, who was favoured by the Whigs, against Bromley, who was proposed by the Tories. The contest was carried on with great heat and animosity between the two parties; but the majority in favour of Smith proved the triumph of the Whigs.

Reconciles
Godolphin
with the
Whigs.

Walpole had already exerted himself with considerable success, in cementing this union between Godolphin and the Whigs; but he now came forward with still greater effect, and strenuously exhorted his patron to obtain the zealous co-operation of that powerful and popular party. He urged, that the leaders of the Tories in the house of commons, were directed and influenced by his enemies and rivals; and censured the spirit of bitterness and violence of umbrage and persecution which had been lately predominant in all their measures; he represented, in the strongest terms, that the Tories, although they had been roused by the general energy of the nation to approve and second the grand alliance, were yet averse to the continuance of the war with France; and that on the contrary, the Whigs were not only sincere, but enthusiastic in their zeal for the depression of the house of Bourbon.

His representations were listened to with attention, and gradually produced their effect; Godolphin availed himself of his intimacy with Devonshire, Halifax, Somers, and Townshend, to arrange the coalition, which afterwards

* From the late lord Walpole, to the late earl of Hardwick.

† Etough's Account of Sir Robert Walpole.

took place. If the union of the Treasurer with this party was not so complete and uniform as some of the zealous Whigs expected, the failure proceeded from his apprehensions of the queen's displeasure, his inclination to the principles of the Tories, and his affection for the dethroned family, which was never entirely obliterated.

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In consequence of these repugnant principles, the administration was a motley mixture of Tories and Whigs, perpetually at variance, and secretly caballing to supplant each other. At first the Tories seemed predominant in the cabinet; but the ascendancy of the Whigs soon appeared, from the nomination of Cowper to be lord keeper of the great seal, in the room of sir Nathaniel Wright; yet Harley still continued secretary of state, and through the means of Mrs. Masham, was gradually undermining the influence of Godolphin and Marlborough. During these cabals, the leaders of the Whigs, perceiving that the queen favoured the Tories, forced Charles earl of Sunderland into the office of secretary of state, in the place of sir Charles Hedges, in direct opposition to the avowed wish of the queen, and in contradiction* to the secret inclinations both of Godolphin and Marlborough. The appointment of Sunderland was a decided victory, and from that moment the whole administration adopted the principles, and followed the measures of the Whigs. After some unavailing struggles, Harley was dismissed from the office of secretary of state, and succeeded by Henry Boyle, afterwards lord Carleton, who proved his friendship for Walpole, by appointing his brother, Horace, his private secretary; and the subsequent nomination of lord Somers to the presidentship of the council, completed the triumph of the party.

Changes in
the cabinet.

December
1706.

Whig admini-
stration.

February
1708.

Appointed
secretary at
war.

Walpole himself was not overlooked in the change. He was selected by Marlborough as the most proper person to succeed his favourite, St. John, in the delicate office of secretary at war†; an office which required a person of no less prudence than ability. During the absence of Marlborough, the secretary at war transacted the business of the department personally with the queen; he was to correspond officially and confidentially with the commander in chief; and had the difficult task to conciliate the capricious temper of the duchess of Marlborough, who interfered in all business, governed her husband with the most absolute sway, and who now treated the queen with those marks of disrespect, which finally occasioned her own disgrace, and the fall of the Whig administration.

* Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough.

† The office of secretary at war was destined to Cardonnell, confidential secretary to the

duke of Marlborough; but as he was abroad with the duke, Walpole retained that place until his return.

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1709.
Treasurer of
the navy.

On the decease of Sir Thomas Littleton, Walpole was appointed treasurer of the navy, which office he held for a short time, with that of secretary of war.

In addition to his parliamentary abilities, Walpole endeared himself to Godolphin by activity and punctuality in business, order and precise accounts, great knowledge of finance, and the most engaging manner. The treasurer admitted him into his most secret councils, entrusted him with the delicate office of composing the speeches from the throne, and from the time of Harley's resignation, committed to him the management of the business of commons*. Nothing will place the prudent and conciliating character of the young senator in a stronger light, than that Godolphin and Marlborough, who never cordially coalesced with the Whigs, should take into his confidence, one who had proved himself, and still continued to prove himself, so ardently attached to that party; at the same time he was so far from forfeiting the favour of the Whigs, that he was equally beloved and supported by their leaders.

Manager for
the trial of
Sacheverel.
1710.

In 1710, Walpole was appointed one of the managers for the impeachment of Sacheverel, and principally conducted that business in the house of commons. To bring Sacheverel to a trial, and to distinguish him by an impeachment, managed in the most solemn manner, for a miserable performance, which, without such notice, would have speedily sunk into obscurity, was an inexcusable degradation of the dignity of the house of commons, and affords a striking instance of the height of folly and infatuation to which the spirit of party will carry even the wisest men. It is well known that the measure was suggested by Godolphin, who was severely satirised in the poem under the name of Volpone, and that it was warmly opposed by Somers and the Whig lords. Walpole, in conformity to their opinion, deavoured to prevail on Godolphin to desist from the prosecution; but his arguments were ineffectual. The minister, in this instance, laid aside his usual circumspection, and, irritated by a passion unworthy of the occasion, insisted with so much vehemence, that he finally extorted the consent of his colleagues in office.

Walpole, acting in conformity to their resolutions, conducted him to the bar on the occasion with no less prudence than spirit. It fell to his share to frame the first article of the charge; that Sacheverel had suggested and maintained
“ That the necessary means used to bring about the happy revolution
“ odious and unjustifiable; that his late majesty, in his declaration, dis-
“ missed the least imputation of resistance, and that to impute resistance

* Etough's Account of Sir Robert Walpole.

“ said revolution, was to cast black and odious colours upon his late majesty and the said revolution.”

On this delicate subject, which it is so difficult to define and restrain within the proper bounds, while the doctrine of resistance is allowed, in cases of extreme necessity, he spoke with equal precision, moderation, and energy, and drew the happy medium between the extremes of licentiousness and rational liberty; between a just opposition to arbitrary measures, and a due submission to a free and well-regulated government*. While he reprobated, in the strongest terms, the doctrines of divine indefeasible right, and passive obedience, he by no means encouraged, even in the slightest degree, any vague notions of resistance in undetermined cases, or upon trivial motives; but established hereditary right as the essence of the British constitution, never to be transgressed, except in such instances as justified the revolution.

The result of this ill-judged trial was far different from the event which Godolphin and his friends weakly expected. The triumph of the Tories was evident from the lenity of the sentence, which only ordered, that the sermon should be burnt by the common hangman, and suspended Sacheverel from preaching during three years. The unpopularity of the ministers was highly increased; the inclination of the queen, in favour of their opponents, was ostentatiously manifested; the populace was inflamed; and the consequence of this act of imprudence and precipitation, was the downfall of those who hoped to find, in the condemnation of Sacheverel, the revival of their popularity, and the establishment of their power.

It may not perhaps, in this place, be improper to observe, that the fatal and mischievous consequences which resulted from the trial of Sacheverel, had a permanent effect on the future conduct of Walpole, when he was afterwards placed at the head of administration. It infused into him an aversion and horror at any interposition in the affairs of the church, and led him to assume, occasionally, a line of conduct which appeared to militate against those principles of general toleration, to which he was naturally inclined.

Soon after the removal of the Whig administration, Walpole published a pamphlet on this † remarkable trial, entitled, *Four Letters to a Friend in North Britain, upon the publishing the Trial of Dr. Sacheverel*. The first letter states the particulars which preceded the trial; the second, those which

* This speech, written in his own hand, is still extant among the Orford Papers. The printed speech, in the account of Sacheverel's trial, is taken from it verbatim. Burke has quoted a sensible passage of it in his *Appeal from the new to the old Whigs*, p. 65.

† This pamphlet is erroneously attributed to Arthur Mainwaring, by Tindal, and the *Biographia Britannica*. See *Royal and Noble Authors*; Article, Earl of Orford.

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accompanied it; the third, those which followed it; and the fourth the consequences. The purport of this publication, was to prove in a familiar language, and by a plain, but strong deduction of reasoning, the abettors of Sacheverel were the abettors of the Pretender; and those who agreed with him to condemn such resistance as dethroned the king, could have no other meaning than the restitution of the son.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH;

1710.

Intrigues and Cabals which occasioned the Removal of the Whig Administration. Walpole holds a confidential Correspondence with the Duke of Marlborough, Lord Townshend, and Horace Walpole.—Rejects the Offers and desires of Harley.—Refuses to take a Part in the new Administration.

Removal of
the Whig ad-
ministration.

WALPOLE now began to enjoy, in the possession of an honest and lucrative office, the reward of his able and uniform conduct, and had the pride of seeing his country successful beyond the expectations of former ages, since the days of Elizabeth, under a great and wise administration, in which he bore an active part. Marlborough, Godolphin, Sunderland, Wharton, Cowper, Halifax, and Townshend, occupied the posts of government, were united in the same cause, acted with the same views, and promoted the honour and advantage of England by the same vigorous and spirited measures; but he did not long feel this satisfaction for at the very moment when the country was reaping the fruits of his wisdom, foresight, and energy, the ministry was removed. Had no change taken place, the king of France must have accepted the peace offered by England, and unequivocally compelled his grandson Philip, to renounce the crown of Spain. St. Simon * calls the change which introduced a Tory administration that saved France, *les ministres de Londres*. The king of Prussia †, also speaking of Marlborough

* *Memoires secrets du regne de Louis XIV, par Louis duc de St. Simon.*

† *Dialogue Des morts Marlborough, Eugene, Lichtenstein.*

“What! Hoechstedt, Ramilies, Oudernarde, Malplaquet, were not able to defend the name of that great man; and even victory itself could not shield him against envy and detraction? What part,” he adds, “would England have acted without that true hero? he supported and raised her, and would have exalted her to the pinnacle of greatness, but for those wretched female intrigues, of which France took advantage to occasion his disgrace. Louis the Fourteenth was lost, if Marlborough had retained his power two years more.” In fact, the removal of the Whig ministry retarded, instead of accelerating the peace, because it encouraged Louis the Fourteenth to break the congress of Gertruydenberg, threw the queen entirely into his power, and the prediction of Marlborough, in a letter * to Walpole, was eventually verified. “If the schemers are fond of a peace; they are not very dexterous, for most certainly what is doing in England, will be a great encouragement to France for continuing the war.”

There never was any event in the annals of this country attended with more disgraceful consequences to England, or followed by more fatal effects to Europe in general, than the dismissal of those great men, who formed that glorious and successful administration in the reign of queen Anne, called, by way of distinction, the Whig administration.

Our regret at their fall, is still further heightened from the consideration, that it was occasioned by the overbearing temper of a mistress of the robes †, and principally effected by the petty intrigues of a bed-chamber-woman ‡, against her benefactress. The surprising influence which the duchess of Marlborough had acquired over the weak and irresolute mind of the good queen Anne, is well described in that extraordinary apology of her conduct, which the duchess gave to the public. We there find a princess of the most placid temper, fascinated by the captivating manners of an artful, but agreeable woman; a queen, imbued with high notions of regal dignity, and a most exact observer of forms, throwing off all etiquette, and corresponding with her favourite, under the fictitious names of Morley and Freeman. We find the duchess, after having engaged the affections of her mistress by the most assiduous attention, relapsing into gross neglect, and in consequence gradually sinking in favour. We find her at the same time either not perceiving, or striving to conceal from others, and even from herself, the decline of her ascendancy, and increasing the disgust of the queen, by her rude and intemperate behaviour. Unfortunately, the duchess of Marlborough had so

* See Correspondence, June 23d, 1710.

† Duchess of Marlborough. — ‡ Abigail Hill, Mrs. and afterwards lady Masham.

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much credit and power with the duke, her husband, and Godolphin, to remove her it became necessary to remove the ministry, over whom she possessed so strong an influence. The artful and cautious manner by which Mrs. Masham supplanted the duchess of Marlborough, is also related in an apology, which may be called a manual of court intrigues, and her conduct with Harley, are detailed in the writings of Swift, who derived his information on that subject, from the most unquestionable authorities.

The Whigs were beginning to lose their popularity, when the trial of Sacheverel raised a ferment in the nation, and excited a general opposition against them. The ministry, and particularly the duke of Marlborough, were accused of protracting the war for their own interests; and this calumny was urged so boldly and repeatedly, that it was finally believed; the treaty of Utrecht, also, which the British plenipotentiaries attempted to exact from Louis the Fourteenth, though strictly consonant to true policy, and founded on principles laid down at the commencement of the war, were declared illiberal, and only advanced to prevent that haughty monarch from acceding to the terms.

From an impartial review of the numerous papers, to which I have had access, and from a diligent comparison of the political writings of the times, I feel the strongest conviction, that the ministry were sincere in proposing the terms of peace at the congress of Gertruydenberg; that they were even anxious to lower the demands of the Dutch, and make the peace moderate as were consistent with the security of Europe, and that they were sincere in their expectations that Louis the Fourteenth, circumstanced as he then was, would accede to them. It also appears, from the Diary of Lord Godolphin, that he was the only one of the ministers who harboured a doubt on the subject, and that by expressing that doubt he incurred the indignation of the king and Godolphin *. During the trial of Sacheverel, when their unpopularity

Intrigues of
Harley.

* 23^d Janry. 1709, Sunday, lord treasurer at his house, read duke Marlborough's letter, dated about 15 days before, from Hague; that Buys and 3 of the Burgers of Amsterdam, and the Pensioner had received sometime since, by overtures of peace from France, viz^t to quit Spain and the West Indies, and to give a barrier to states in Flanders, that 'twas a great secret, known only as above; that the Pensioner said he should be ruined if known he had kept it from the states so long. Lord treasurer said, he shew'd it me by queen's order; I advis'd, and it was agreed only to put the proposals more particularly, and at large, as soon as possible, several intermediate debates in cabinet, shew'd by lord treasurer.

April 12, the following letter from duke Marlborough, Hague, April 19, 1709. The States Gen^l were with me yesterday about 2 hours, the which time was spent on the subject of their barrier. After I had given them all the assurances I thought necessary, I enquired into the intentions and inclinations of the French and English nation, of concurring with them in what might be reasonable for their benefit. I did endeavour to cure them of any jealousy they might have of my being particularly concerned. I hope it has had a good effect on 'em; however, I have done all I can, and do so to keep them in good humour, if possible. The inclosed is what they desire for their barrier. It incloses what might be thought a

king

creased, Harley was admitted, by the introduction of Mrs. Masham, to several private interviews with the queen, in which he endeavoured to persuade her to dismiss the ministry, but as she was of a timid, procrastinating disposition, he had great difficulty in succeeding. Not being able to prevail upon her to take a bold step, he artfully led her, by insensible degrees, to the accomplishment of his scheme. With this view, he persuaded her to consult the duke * of Shrewsbury, whom he had previously gained, and in whom she placed great confidence, on these points; "Would the public credit suffer by the change of administration? Could that measure be carried into effect without a dissolution of parliament? or would that dissolution be attended with danger? Could a peace be negotiated with safety to the queen, and with honour to the allies?"

The duke of Shrewsbury having given his opinion in the affirmative, and supported the queen in her resolution, Harley persuaded her to appoint earl Rivers lieutenant of the Tower, in opposition to the recommendation of Marlborough †, and to bestow a regiment, vacant by the death of the earl of Effex, on Mr. Hill, brother to Mrs. Masham. As the promotion of this officer was highly disagreeable to the duchess of Marlborough, and must tend to lessen the duke's weight and authority in the army, he remonstrated in person, and urged his objections in such a manly and spirited manner, as displeased the queen, and induced her to answer, that he would do well to advise with his friends. Godolphin having no less ineffectually represented to her, that the duke's long and faithful services, deserved a more favourable treatment, Marlborough retired in disgust to Windsor, and wrote a high

kingdom. I hope to persuade them from some of it; so that I beg very few may see it: but when I have done all that may be in my power, I shall then send it to the secret, so that it may come regularly to her majesty, and the cab. council. Mons^r Reuillies messenger returned last night, but I am told he desires two days to decypher his dispatches; so that Tuesday will be the soonest I shall be able to give you an account of this matter. This is so critical a time, that I dare not be of any opinion: but I tremble when I think that a very little impatience may ruin a sure game Barrier, Dendm^d, Chateau de Ghent, Dame, Ostend, Newport, Furnes, Knocq, Ipres, Menin, Lisle, Tournay, Condé, Mons, Valenciennes, Maubeuge, Charleroy, Namur, Luxembourg, Sier, Haut-Geldre en propre, permission to fortify Hall, S^r le Demer, the head of Flanders, with

the forts on the Scheld, Huy, Leige, and Bon.

Note, during the remaining transaction of the intended peace, which was laid in all its steps before whole cabinet, lord treasurer, lord president Somers, and all other lords, did ever seem confident of a peace. My own distrust was so remarkable, that I was once perfectly chid by the lord treasurer, never so much in any other case, for saying such orders would be proper if the French King signed the preliminary treaty. He resented my making a question of it, and said there could be no doubt, &c. For my part, nothing but seeing so great men believe it, could ever incline me to think France reduced so low as to accept such conditions.—Lord Cowper's Diary; Hardwicke Papers.

* Life of the Duke of Shrewsbury.

† Swift's Memoirs relating to the Change in the Queen's Ministry, v. XV. p. 20.

spirited;

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Walpole
corresponds
with Marlbo-
rough.

Laments the
division of
the Whigs.

spirited, but indiscreet letter; which, after stating his readiness to obey commands, expressed his regret that all his services could not protect him from the malice of a bedchamber woman, and requested instant permission to retire. Before the queen had received this letter, she became apprehensive that the resignation of the duke at this critical juncture, should cause dissensions in the nation, and alarmed at the threats of Sunderland, to propose to the house of lords the removal of Mrs. Masham, ordered Godolphin to inform Marlborough, that he might dispose of the regiment. In reply to his letter, she also expressed her concern at what had passed, and by this descension engaged him to continue the command of the army in Flanders. But although the queen yielded in this instance, she persevered in her resolutions, and soon afterwards gave unequivocal proofs of her resolution, by dismissing the marquis of Kent from the post of lord chamberlain, and transferring that office on the duke of Shrewsbury, against the inclinations of the ministry.

During these transactions Walpole maintained an official and confidential correspondence with the duke of Marlborough, while absent from England, with Lord Townshend, plenipotentiary at the congress of Gertruyden, and with his brother Horace Walpole, private secretary to Lord Townshend. The whole of this interesting correspondence is not extant, but a sufficient part is still preserved * to do honour to the persons who were engaged in it, to throw a new light over the transactions of that period, and to illustrate the conduct of the ministers on that memorable occasion. It is evident that their fall was owing no less to their own division, than to the influence of Mrs. Masham and Harley, and the opposition of the Tories. It appears to have been the opinion of Walpole, that more active and consistent measures should have been pursued before the removal of Sunderland. He lamented the division of the ministry, the jealousy and coldness of Godolphin, who would not make any attempt to save Sunderland; he was distressed that his disgrace would be followed by the dismissal of Godolphin and Marlborough, which they did not foresee, or else their disinclination to. Sunderland overcame the apprehensions which they ought to have entertained for their own safety.

Walpole was at that time in a subordinate situation. He had great obligations both to Godolphin and Marlborough, and he was joined in counsel with the Whig leaders. He had therefore a very delicate part to act. He wrote to Marlborough with great spirit and freedom; and even ventured to advise him not to offend the queen, by refusing obstinately to promote

* See Correspondence, Period I.

husband and brother of Mrs. Masham ; although such advice was most likely to offend, as in fact it did offend, the duchess of Marlborough. It appears also from these letters, that Marlborough and Godolphin meanly tampered with the duke of Shrewsbury, and attempted, through his influence over the queen, to prevent the dissolution of the parliament ; instead of boldly and manfully coming forward, they acted this underhand part, and suffered by this dilatory and equivocal conduct Harley to divide and disunite the Whigs.

Perhaps it may be conjectured, that if on the dismissal of Sunderland, which was sure to be followed by other changes, notwithstanding the positive assurances of the queen to the contrary, Godolphin and all his friends had instantly resigned their places, and if the duke of Marlborough had given up his command of the army, so unanimous and bold a measure would have dispirited the queen, and alarmed the Tories. Under these impressions she could not have ventured to make a sudden and total change ; she would probably have been checked by the apprehension of alienating the whole party of the Whigs, who then formed a large majority in parliament, and of disgusting the monied men, many of whom made the public credit personal to Godolphin, and scrupling to advance money upon the faith of the nation, offered it upon his single word*. She would have dreaded the remonstrances of the emperor and the Dutch, who justly considered the great successes of the war as principally owing to the military talents of Marlborough.

Such was the opinion of Walpole ; and Sir Richard Temple, afterwards Lord Cobham, expressed his sentiments in favour of a general resignation, in a spirited letter to his friend Walpole, with whom he then acted, and by whom he had been strongly recommended to the duke of Marlborough. But, both Walpole and his brother Horace foresaw and lamented that the Whigs, instead of adopting this decisive and manly conduct, would be divided among themselves, and that several would listen to the insidious overtures of Harley. In effect, that artful minister flattered them with the hopes that the parliament should not be dissolved, and representing the danger which would threaten the constitution and religion, should their whole body desert the queen, he used the remarkable expressions, “ That a Whig game was “ intended at the bottom,” and that his great object would be to promote the Protestant succession†.

These representations and promises had a due effect, and helped to break the phalanx, which, had it remained firm and compact, must have been invincible.

* Life of the duke of Shrewsbury.

† Cowper's Diary ; Hardwicke Papers.

Many.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

Many of the Whigs hesitated, and delayed their resignation. New remained in power until he was removed. The duke of Somerset was persuaded by the queen to keep his place, but affected to declare that he not attend the privy council; and even Halifax, the stern champion party, is said to have availed himself of his long acquaintance with her and to have so effectually treated with him in private, that none of his relations were displaced*. Marlborough retained the command of the army only to be dismissed with ignominy†, when his services were no longer so necessary. Devonshire, Henry Boyle, Wharton, Somers, and Cowper were among the few leaders who resigned with spirit and dignity.

Resignation
of Lord Cowper.

Lord Chancellor Cowper, in particular, behaved with unexampled modesty and honour. He rejected with scorn all the overtures which were made, in the most humble and supplicating manner, to induce him to continue in office. When he waited on the queen to resign, she strongly proposed his resolution, and returned the seals three times, after he had thrown them down. At last, when she could not prevail, she commanded him to take them; adding, I beg it as a favour of you, if I may use that expression. Cowper could not refuse to obey her commands; but after a short time, taking up the seals, he said that he would not carry them out of the country except on the promise, that the surrender of them would be accepted tomorrow. "The arguments on my side," to use the words of Lord Cowper himself, "and professions, and the repeated importunities of her majesty" drew this audience into the length of three quarters of an hour‡. The following day, his resignation was accepted, and soon afterwards the seals were given to Sir Simon Harcourt.

Walpole rejects the overtures of Harley.

Walpole acted on this occasion an honourable and disinterested part. In the wreck of this great administration, Harley, desirous of retaining power several of the Whigs, with a view to counterbalance the credit of St. John and Harcourt, who already began to give him umbrage, endeavoured to gain Walpole. He made very flattering advances; told him that he was worth half his party§, and pressed him to continue in administration; but all his efforts proved ineffectual.

Harley finding at last, that promises and flattery were employed without avail, had recourse to threats. Hawes, one of his confidential emissaries, was afterwards receiver of the customs, informed Walpole, that the king had in his possession a note for the contract of forage, indorsed by him.

* Cunningham's History of Great Britain, vol. 2. p. 305. Letter from Horace Walpole to Etough, September 21st 1752. See Correspondence, Period II.

† The manner in which Marlborough was treated by the new ministry, appears by two

letters from Bolingbroke to Drummond. Correspondence, Period I, 1711.

‡ Cowper's Diary.

§ Letter to Mr. Pulteney, in answer to Remarks, p. 47.

infinuation was made in such a manner, as to imply, that if Walpole would come over to the new ministry, this note should not be produced against him. But he, no less disdainful of menaces than before he was regardless of promises, rejected all overtures. In a letter* written on the 19th of September, he observes to his friend general Stanhope; "I believe, in all probability, this will be the last letter I shall write from this office. We are in such a way here, as I cannot describe. But you can imagine nothing worse than you will hear. The parliament is not yet dissolved, but this week will certainly determine it. Dear Stanhope, God prosper you, and pray make haste to us, that you may see what you will not believe if it were told you." A few days after writing this letter, he retired from the office of secretary at war.

Chapter 5.

1710.

Sept. 29.

Retires from the office of secretary at war.

Harley, however, was not repulsed by the first refusal of Walpole to support his administration. He had too much success with many of the Whigs, not to exert every effort to gain a man whose talents and eloquence he held in the highest estimation. He suffered him to continue in his place of treasurer of the navy, several months after the Whig ministry were entirely routed. He sent several messages, and held several conversations with him, to persuade him to moderate his opposition against the new measures; but his constant answer was, "Make a safe and honourable peace, and preserve the Protestant succession, and you will have no opposition †."

CHAPTER THE SIXTH:

1711—1713.

Conduct of Walpole in Opposition.—Able defends the late Administration against the Charge of not accounting for the public Expenditure.—Accused of Breach of Trust and Corruption when Secretary at War.—Committed to the Tower.—Expelled the House, and incapacitated from sitting in the present Parliament.—Visited by Persons of the first Distinction and Abilities.—Writes an able Defence of himself.

AS Walpole dignified and supported an administration prosperous at home and glorious abroad, so when it was vilified and disgraced, he made animated replies to the attacks of a powerful and irritated party. During

Chap. 6.

1711 to 1713.

Supports the late administration.

* Walpole Papers.

† Etough's Papers; Horace Walpole to Etough, Oct. 14, 1752.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

the intervening period, from his resignation to the death of queen Anne persevered in attachment to his late associates, and in harassing the ministers, with great ability, both in and out of parliament. The first in which he appeared the champion of the fallen party, was upon the occasion of an address to the queen. On this occasion, Walpole, whom in his history of the four last years of queen Anne, calls *one* Mr. Robert Walpole, proposed an amendment to the address, importing that no peace should be honourable to Great Britain and Europe, if Spain and the Indies should be allotted to a branch of the house of Bourbon. This clause, which had been carried by the lords, was negatived in the house of commons by a great majority.

But his subsequent efforts were still more important and useful. The Tories having attempted to arraign the measures of their predecessors in parliament, returned their principal objections against the management of the revenue, a topic on which it was most easy to delude the public mind, by introducing a series of complicated calculations. This attack was principally levelled at Godolphin, who was accused of having profusely lavished the public money, and of not having accounted for the sums voted by parliament. Several of his former adherents in the house of commons deserted the minister, a few defended his cause, and argued that the clamours raised against him, were merely the effusions of malice and calumny. The insidious attack was masqued under the plausible appearance of appointing a committee for examining and stating the public accounts. St. John employed the powers of his eloquence, to shew the necessity of taking into consideration the national expenditure; maintained that none but those who were attached to their country, or who would themselves plunder the treasury, would be so bold as to oppose the inquiry; and supported his arguments with the most ardent affectation of zeal for the church and constitution.

Speaks in favour of Godolphin.

No sooner had St. John ceased speaking, than Walpole rose with spirit to vindicate his patron from the imputation of corruption and misadministration. He did not, however, condescend to make any reply to the critical asseveration of St. John, in regard to religion, but confined his remarks to the subject of debate. He explained, in a calm and distinct manner, the accounts of the public expenditure, and confirmed the truth of the report, by the original receipts, and the most authentic testimonies. Having proved that the inquiry was founded on party animosity, he concluded by observing, "If he is accused, who cannot be charged with crime, or any just suspicion of a crime, and whom the member who spoke could neither fear nor hate, take heed lest the constitution should receive a wound through his sides. It is obvious, how much the multitude is

Chapter 6.
1711 to 1713.

Report of the
committee.

the influence of bribery, it is obvious, that the people of England are at this moment animated against each other, with a spirit of hatred and rancour. It behoves you, in the first place, to find a remedy for those distempers, which at present are predominant in the civil constitution, and unless you reject this inquiry with becoming indignation, I leave you to conjecture the situation to which this kingdom and government are likely to be exposed *". But the zeal and eloquence of Walpole had no effect; for the committee was appointed, consisting of persons principally Tories, and two notorious Jacobites; all previously determined to arraign the proceedings of the former administration. The result of their inquiry was given in a most extraordinary report, which passed the house on the 12th of April, and was presented to the queen on the same day. After stating the great arrears due from public taxes, many embezzlements and scandalous abuses, evil mismanagement in public offices, and misapplication of parliamentary supplies, it boldly asserted, "That of the monies granted by parliament, and issued for the public service to Christmas 1710, THERE REMAINS UNACCOUNTED FOR, THE SUM OF £.35,302,107, FOR A GREAT PART OF WHICH NO ACCOMPTS HAVE SO MUCH AS BEEN LAID BEFORE THE AUDITORS; and for the rest, though some accompts have been brought in, yet they have not been prosecuted by the accountants, and finished." This unqualified reproach cast by the house of commons on the ex-ministers, had for a short time a prodigious effect in increasing the unpopularity of the Whigs. The people conceived it to be impossible, that the commons would advance such an assertion, without the most convincing proofs in its favour. A general belief gained ground, that the nation had been deceived and betrayed; fresh confidence was placed in the new ministers, who thus displayed their care for the people, and proved their capacity by contriving such means as might ascertain and secure so vast a debt.

In opposition to these accusations, Walpole again came forth as the champion of his colleagues, and published "The Debts of the Nation stated and considered," and the "Thirty-five Millions accounted for." In these publications, the author, who is called by Arthur Mainwaring, *the best master of figures of any man of his time*, gave, in a small compass, so accurate a scheme of the public debts, especially of the navy, together with the management of the revenues, the anticipations, the debts, and the reasons and necessity of them, as entirely undeceived the public, and refuted the calumnies which had been so industriously raised †. He proved, in a clear and satisfactory

Answered by
Walpole.

* Cunningham's History of Great Britain, vol. 2. p. 349, 350

† Conduct of Robert Walpole, Esquire,

from the beginning of the reign of queen Anne, to the present time, 1717, p. 29.—Tindal.—Oldmixon.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

manner, that the debt of the navy, which was estimated at £. 5,130,500, did not exceed £. 574,000; and that of the whole £. 35,000,000, all but £. 4,000,000 had been accounted for.

Accused of
corruption.

December 21.

1712.
January 17.

Walpole had distinguished himself too ably in the house of commons, and by his publications had proved himself too warm a friend of the fallen ministry, and too powerful an adversary to the reigning administration, not to be singled out as one of the sacrifices to be made at the shrine of party vengeance. His expulsion, therefore, from the house of commons was resolved, and a meeting held for the purpose of consulting on the means of proceeding, by the leaders of the opposite party. But the injustice of the act was esteemed so flagrant, and the imputations of guilt so faint and false, that many of those who had united to overturn the late administration, declared their aversion to this malicious design. Bromley*, however, moved their scruples, by declaring that the expulsion of Walpole was *unum necessarium*, as they could not carry on the business, if he was suffered to continue in the house. It is no wonder, therefore, that his enemies, who could command a majority, should find a plausible pretext. The commissioners of public accounts laid a charge of venality and corruption against him for forage-contracts in Scotland while he was secretary at war. They accused him of having taken, in two contracts, two notes of hand, for 500 guineas, the other for £. 500, the first of which had been paid, and a receipt given in his name, and of the other £. 400 was paid. It appeared on examination of the witnesses, on oath, that the contractors, rather than admit into their partnership Robert Mann, agent for Walpole, who, according to the tenour of the original agreement, reserved a share for a friend, had a benefit of the fifth part, if not redeemed by the contractors with a sum of money, had preferred paying the 500 guineas and £. 500; and that Mann had received the money for the first note, and had obtained the second note as a deposit for the sum specified to be paid.

In consequence of these reports, Walpole was heard in his own defence, though no particulars of his speech are preserved in the proceedings of parliament; after he had withdrawn, a warm debate took place, which lasted till past ten at night. His friends, on this occasion, supported him with so much zeal, that the house was divided four times in the same sitting, and the ministers, who carried all political questions in this session with only a trifling opposition, gained the motions for his condemnation and expulsion by a small majority. On the first division, in which Pulteney, then an intimate friend, afterwards his most bitter opponent, was teller,

* Letter from Horace Walpole to Etough, September 21, 1751.

amendment, to leave out the words, "and notorious corruption," was negatived by a majority of 52. The main question passed in the affirmative by 57. The motion for committing him to the Tower by only twelve; and his expulsion was decreed by 22 *. These small majorities sufficiently prove, either that Walpole possessed great personal influence in the house, or that many of the Tories considered his accusation a scandalous prosecution, and would not give their votes against him. The house, however, resolved, "That Robert Walpole, esquire, was guilty of a high breach of trust, and notorious corruption. That he should be committed prisoner to the Tower of London;" and on a subsequent motion, which was carried only by a majority of twenty votes, that he should be expelled †.

Chapter 6.
1711 to 1713.

Expelled the house.

On the next morning, Walpole surrendered himself a prisoner, and was committed to the Tower. It was expected, that he would have petitioned, and submitted himself to the censure of the house; but he refused making any concession, which could imply a consciousness of guilt, and he therefore remained a prisoner until the prorogation of parliament. In the mean time a new writ being issued for Lynn, he was re-chosen for that borough; but a petition being made against the return, by Samuel Taylor, the opposing candidate, the commons resolved, "That having been expelled this house for an high breach of trust in the execution of his office, and notorious corruption, when secretary at war, he was incapable of being re-elected a member to serve in the present parliament ‡."

Committed to the Tower.

While he remained a prisoner, he was considered as a martyr to the cause of the Whigs, and repeatedly visited by persons of the highest distinction and abilities, particularly by the duke and duchess of Marlborough, Godolphin, Sunderland, Somers, and Pulteney; and his apartment exhibited the appearance of a crowded levee ||.

Visited by persons of distinction.

During his confinement, he had sufficient leisure to compose a clear and judicious vindication of himself, which was published under the title of "*The Case of Mr. Walpole, in a Letter from a Tory Member of Parliament to his Friend in the Country.*" In this masterly defence, he fully justifies himself, and appeals to evidence, taken upon oath, from the two principal charges, high breach of trust, and notorious corruption. In regard to high

Publishes his defence.

* 1st. 155 against 207. 2d. 148—205. 3d. 156—168. 4th. 148—170. The motion of censure against the duke of Marlborough was carried by a much greater majority, 270 against 165.—Journals.

† Journals.—Chandler's Debates.

‡ Journals.—Chandler's Debates.

|| Life of the Duke of Shrewsbury.—Annals of Queen Anne, for 1712, p. 140.—Conduct of Mr. Walpole.—Answer to a scurrilous Libel.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

breach of trust, he shews that he had no advantage in the contract; he was not the only person concerned in making them, and that they were settled on the best and most advantageous terms to be obtained at the time. In reply to the charge of notorious corruption, he proves that a share in the contract being given to his friend, Robert Mann, the contractors paid him a sum of money in recompence for giving up his share. The contractor, who had negotiated this bargain with Mann, dying, another not knowing his name, made the note of hand payable to Walpole or order, for the use of his friend; that the note was endorsed by Walpole only for form, and the money received by Mann was for his own use and profit, and that Walpole had not the least interest, directly or indirectly, in the affair.

I have been thus particular in stating the defence of Walpole, because it gives strong proofs of his innocence, and was never fairly and candidly answered; because some of the very persons who visited him in prison not only defended but applauded his conduct in this instance, after he was in opposition, reproached him with the commission of this very crime of which they had publicly and formally absolved him; and because late * writers, of different principles, have stigmatised his memory, without having sufficiently examined his defence †.

This imprisonment has been called the prelude to his rise; and John Lanfdowne, who was afterwards consigned to the same apartment, wrote these lines under Walpole's name, which he had left on the window:

Good unexpected, evil unforeseen,
Appear by turns, as fortune shifts the scene;
Some rais'd aloft, come tumbling down again,
And fall so hard, they bound and rise again ‡.

Eastcourt's
ballad.

A popular ballad, composed by Eastcourt the player, in honour

* See Smollet, vol. 2. p. 209. Macpherson's History, vol. 2. p. 537.

† For the investigation of this inquiry, in which the honour and character of Sir Robert Walpole is involved, I have consulted and compared the Journals of the House of Commons, Proceedings in Parliament, Burnet, Tindal, Oldmixon, Case of Mr. Walpole, Conduct of Robert Walpole, esquire, and An Answer to the Character and Conduct of Robert Walpole, esquire; with an exact account

of his popularity, published in 1717. In the last publication, the author endeavoured to refute Walpole's defence of himself, and to prove that the money paid to Mann was for his own use; but as all his accusations are mere assertions and conjectures, without the smallest evidence of the fact, it is not worth mentioning as a proof that I have not only one side of the question.

‡ Walpole's Catalogue of Royal Authors, V. II. p. 123. Lanfdowne

pole, during his imprisonment, proves the high esteem in which he was then held by his party, and predicted, with a true prophetic spirit, his future greatness.

Chapter 6.

1711 to 1713.

On the Jewel in the Tower.

I.

If what the Tower of London holds
Is valu'd for more than its power;
Then counting what it now enfolds,
How wondrous rich is the same *Tower*.

2.

I think not of the armory,
Nor of the guns and lion's roar;
Nor yet the valu'd library,
I mean the Jewel in the *Tower*.

3.

This jewel late adorn'd the court;
With excellence unknown before;
But now being blown upon in sport,
This Jewel's case is now the *Tower*.

4.

State lapidaries there have been,
To weigh and prove and look it o'er;
The very fashion's worth being seen,
Th' intrinsic, more than is the *Tower*.

5.

'Tis not St. George's diamond,
Nor any of his partner's store;
It never yet to such belong'd,
Which sent this Jewel to the *Tower*.

6.

With thousand methods they did try it;
Whose firmness strengthen'd ev'ry hour;
They were not able all to buy it,
And so they sent it to the *Tower*.

Period I.

1676 to 1714.

7.

They would have prov'd it counterfeit,
That it was right 'twas truly sworn;
But oaths, nor words, cou'd nothing get,
And so they sent it to the *Tower*.

8.

It's brilliant brightness who can doubt,
By Marlborough it was sometimes wore;
They turn'd the mighty master out,
Who turn'd this jewel into the *Tower*.

9.

These are the marks upon it found,
King William's crest it bears before,
And liberty's engraven round,
Though now confin'd within the *Tower*.

10.

Nor France in it an interest has,
Nor Spain with all its golden ore;
For to the queen and high allies,
Belongs this Jewel in the *Tower*.

11.

The owners modestly reserv'd
It in a decent Norfolk bower,
And scarce yet think it has deserv'd
The Cæsar's honour of the *Tower*.

12.

The day shall come to make amends,
This jewel shall with pride be wore,
And o'er his foes, and with his friends,
Shine glorious bright out of the *Tower*.

Lady Walpole*, who had a pleasing voice, used to sing this ballad with great spirit and effect, and was particularly fond of dwelling on the last verse at the time when the prophecy was fulfilled; when the prisoner

“ O'er his foes, and with his friends,
“ Shone glorious bright out of the *Tower*.”

* From Lord Orford.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH:

1712—1714.

Released from his Imprisonment.—Exertions in Favour of his Party.—Publishes various political Pieces.—Eulogium of him, by Godolphin.—Publishes the History of the late Parliament.—Re-elected for Lynn.—Speaks against the Peace; the Treaty of Commerce; and the Schism Bill:—In favour of Sir Richard Steele, for printing the Crisis and the Englishman.

THE ministry having protracted the session by adjournment *, instead of ending it by prorogation, merely to detain him in prison, Walpole was not released until the 8th of July. From that period till the dissolution, which took place on the 8th of August 1713, being incapacitated from serving his party in the house of commons, he exerted himself in maintaining the union of the Whigs, in conciliating the leaders, often discordant in their opinions, jealous of each other, or lukewarm in their conduct. He was a principal director of their counsels, and the great manager of their deliberations. The magnanimity and cheerfulness with which he acted and suffered, his liberality in expending large sums in procuring intelligence, and promoting the Protestant succession, the hospitality with which he entertained his political associates, endeared him to the party, animated their counsels, and contributed to preserve them from defection. The heavy expences incurred by these means, injured his private fortune, and involved him in pecuniary embarrassments; a circumstance which perhaps gave rise to, or at least sanctioned the report, afterwards industriously circulated by opposition, of his being a needy adventurer, who had not credit enough to raise an hundred pounds on his own security †. The gratitude he afterwards displayed to those persons who accommodated him with money at a considerable risk, does honour to his character.

During this period, he ably employed his pen in the service of his party. He assisted Steele in several political pamphlets ‡; and published an answer

1712.
June 21.
Released.

Political
publications.

* Journals.—History of his Administration, p. 16.

† Pulteney's Reply to Sedition and Defa-

mation Displayed, p. 8.—An Answer to one Part of an Infamous Libel, &c. p. 34.

‡ Macpherson's Papers, vol. 2. p. 511.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

Walpole asked the house, "Why the author was answerable in parliament the things which he wrote in his private capacity? And if he is punishable by law, why is he not left to the law? By this mode of proceeding parliament, which used to be the scourge only of evil ministers, is made by ministers the scourge of the subject. The ministers, he added, are sufficiently armed with authority; they possess the great sanction of rewards and punishments, the disposal of the privy purse, the grace of pardoning, and the power of condemning to the pillory for seditious writings; powers connected with, and naturally arising from their exalted situation, and which they do not too jealously guard from being perverted to answer indirect or criminal purposes. In former reigns, the audacity of corruption extended itself to judges and juries; the attempt so to degrade parliament was, till the present period, unheard of. The liberty of the press is unrestrained, and then shall a part of the legislature dare to punish that as a crime which is not declared to be so by any law, framed by the whole? And why should that house be made the instrument of such a detestable purpose; that which had to boast the honourable distinction of being applied to, as the source of redress, in all cases of oppression. Steele, he observed, has advanced nothing which bears a direct criminal construction; nothing which can be construed into guilt without the assistance of forced inuendoes; and yet parliament assume the ungracious part of thus inferring guilt from mere arbitrary construction? If they do, what advantage to government or to the community can be expected to result from such a measure? Are doctrines refuted, and truths suppressed, by being censured or stigmatized?—In the reign of James, it was criminal to say, that the king was a Papist; but the severity of the law, or the cruelty of its ministers could not eradicate the mind of a single individual, the confirmed belief of the fact. Steele is attacked, because he is the advocate for the Protestant succession; the cause which he so ably defends, gives the offence; through his sides the succession is to be wounded; his punishment will be a symptom, that the succession is in danger; and the ministry are now feeling the pulse of parliament, to see how far they may be able to proceed. Does Mr. Steele, he inquired, incur blame for writing against Popery? In the reign of James, indeed, preaching against Popery was considered as casting a reflection on the ministry. It was not so in the reign of king William. From what fatality does it arise, that what is written in favour of the Protestant succession, and was counteracted by the late ministry, is deemed a libel on the present administration? Good invectives in the pulpit against drinking, fornication, or any particular sin, have never been esteemed a reflection on particular persons, unless the

sons are guilty of the darling sin against which the preacher inveighs. It becomes, then, a fair inference, from their irritability and resentment against its defender, that the darling sin of the present administration is to obstruct the Protestant succession. If a Papist, nay an Irish Papist, who for many years has been a servant to the late king James, and the Pretender, (meaning Sir Patrick Lawless) one who has borne arms against her majesty in France and Spain; one who is strongly suspected of having embued his hands in the blood of the late duke of Medina Celi, and marquis of Leganez; if such a man be not only permitted to come into England, but to appear at court, in the presence-chamber; if he be caressed by the ministers; nay, I speak it with horror, if such a man be admitted into her majesty's private audience, in her closet, will not every good subject think her person in danger? And is it then a crime in Mr. Steele to shew his concern for so precious a life *."

The ministers, however, carried their point; the Crisis and Englishman were voted seditious libels, and Steele was expelled the house †.

The speech of Walpole on this occasion procured him great applause; but the public did not know, that the defence made by Steele himself, was in a great degree the offspring of his eloquence; a fact related by bishop Newton, on the authority of Pulteney ‡. "When Steele was to be expelled the house of commons, Mr. Walpole and Mr. Pulteney, and Mr. Addison, were commissioned to go to him, by the noblemen and members of the Kit Kat Club, with their positive order and determination, that Steele should not make his own speech, but Addison should make it for him, and he should recite it from the other's writing, without any insertion or addition of his own. Addison thought this an hard injunction, and said, that he must be like a school-boy, and desire the gentlemen to give him a little sense. Walpole said, that it was impossible to speak a speech in cold blood; but being pressed, he said he would try, and immediately spoke a very good speech of what he thought proper for Steele to say on the occasion; and the next day in the house made another speech as good, or better, on the same subject; but so totally different from the former, that there was scarce a single argument or thought the same; which particulars are mentioned as illustrious proofs of his uncommon eloquence."

* The principal part of this speech is taken from memorandums, in the hand writing of Sir Robert Walpole: Orford Papers.—Chandler.

† Steele afterwards published, "An Apology for himself and his Writings occasioned

by his Expulsion from the House of Commons," which, with a becoming gratitude, he dedicated to Walpole.

‡ Life of Bishop Newton, by himself.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH:

1714.

Zeal of Walpole for the Hanover Succession.—Justification of his Conduct, Presumption that the Protestant Succession was in Danger.—Public Alarms.—Apprehensions.—Death of Queen Anne.

1714.

Declares the
Protestant
succession in
danger.

THE great question, in which Walpole appears to have always engaged himself with unabated zeal, was on the state of the nation with regard to the danger of the Protestant succession. In the course of this debate, British secretary of state, having attempted to prove the negative, by representing the endeavours of the queen to secure that object, and to remove the Pretender from Loraine; Walpole, with great spirit and warmth, avowed his opinion, that although the queen herself afforded no cause of apprehension, much was to be dreaded from the dubious conduct of some persons; he therefore insisted that her name should not be introduced.

The zeal of Walpole on this subject, was by no means adopted in a spirit of opposition, and was not a sudden spark struck out by the circumstances of the moment: it was a leading principle which had regulated his political conduct from his first entrance into life; it had been instilled in him by education, and matured by reason and reflection, to which he firmly adhered in all situations and under all circumstances.

Examination
of his mo-
tives.

If his object in spreading these alarms was to distress government, and excite tumults against the ministers, he acted a false and wicked part; if he really had reason for his suspicions, he must be justified by every principle of attachment to the religion and constitution of the country. He can only be fully vindicated from the conviction, that it was the secret inclination and resolution of the queen to exclude the Hanover family, and to support the Pretender, and that the ministers were disposed to co-operate with her inclinations. At the period of which we are now speaking, the strongest suspicions were entertained, that such a scheme was in agitation, and those suspicions have been since verified by the most authentic documents.

Intrigues in
favour of the
Pretender.

It was natural to suppose, that as the queen had no surviving issue, her affection for her brother, of whose legitimacy she appears never to have entertained a doubt, would supersede her inclination to a foreign family. She had often declared that she did not consider the crown as her right, and the impression

conf

conscience naturally led her to atone for the wrongfulness of her possession, by permitting it to resume its ancient course of descent. In these ideas, she was encouraged by her favorite, Mrs. Masham; and when, by the intrigues of that artful woman, the chief impediment to her projects, the ascendancy of the Whig party, was removed, she entertained them with less reserve, and employed herself assiduously to give them effect. Harley, who had succeeded in dividing the Whigs, so as to prevent their exerting their whole united force in a consistent opposition, yet found he could not carry on the government, and make a peace, without the assistance of the Jacobites: a direct communication was opened between the court of St. Germain's, and that of London; the Pretender addressed a pathetic letter * to the queen, urging his own right to the crown, in which every soothing effort of supplication and submission was employed, and every appeal made to family pride, to tenderness, and justice, which could be supposed to influence a mind naturally benevolent and just, and which was beginning, through lassitude and perplexity, to seek some repose from the multiplied cares of a stormy government. Under these sinister auspices, the peace of Utrecht was made; a peace which confounded the characters of victors and vanquished, and in which the grand objects of the war were completely relinquished. The interests of the Pretender were kept in view, rather than those of the country, and the queen was anxious that the French king should not be deprived of the power of affording him effectual assistance.

The establishment of the Protestant religion was the only motive which could counteract the bias of the queen's mind in favour of her brother. The influence of that consideration was much diminished by her dislike to the family destined to succeed her; a prejudice which induced her to resist all approach of them to her person, and to oppose the applications of the electress Sophia, for a writ to call up the electoral prince to the house of peers; as a prejudice so well known to those who possessed her confidence, that Mrs. Masham made no scruple to declare to the French minister, whom Louis the Fourteenth sent to treat for peace, that the Hanover family *was all their aversion* *, and that it was the wish of the queen, that matters should be so arranged that justice might at some time take place. Those who favoured the cause of the Pretender, were so anxious to avail themselves of these favourable appearances, that they advised him, either in shew, or in fact, to renounce his religion, to withdraw himself from the protection of the French king, to marry a Protestant, and reside in Sweden. Matters were carried so far, that some

* Macpherson's Papers, vol. 2.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

of his sanguine partisans advised him to come to Scotland, and even projected a plan for his being presented by the queen to the parliament, and publicly acknowledged as her successor*. Meetings were held, both in town and country, to promote the repeal of the settlement, and to vest in the queen the power of nominating a successor. These schemes were directly over-ruled, or indirectly counteracted by Harley, who, notwithstanding his junction with the Jacobites, for the purpose of making a peace, and maintaining his ground against the Whigs, does not appear ever to have wished to frustrate the provisions of the settlement. His conduct at length made such an impression on that party through their intrigues he was dismissed from administration, on a suspicion of lukewarmness or duplicity, and Bolingbroke, who was supposed to be implicitly devoted to their interests, was recommended as his successor. The duke of Berwick, natural son of James the Second, and the Pretender's agent with the disaffected in England.

The Whigs
apprized of
these in-
trigues.

These intrigues were too public and notorious to escape the knowledge of the friends to the Protestant succession; Sir Robert Walpole †, in the latter period of his life, frequently declared that the leaders of the Whigs were fully apprized of them, and that he, in particular, drew his information from two persons who were present at a meeting in the country between the chiefs of the ministry and the leading men of both houses. Their deliberations turned on the manner of invalidating or repealing the act of succession. The actual repeal, and a positive declaration of the Pretender's right, was not proposed by some: it was recommended by others, to leave to the queen a full power to nominate her successor by will.

Arguments
of the other
party.

Those who treat the danger of the Protestant succession as chimerical, observe in reply to these inferences, that from the time of the Revolution many of the ministers had corresponded with the Pretender and his family, some of them with the connivance of the sovereign on the throne, and professed with a view of discovering the schemes of the Jacobites. On similar principles it may be conjectured, that Bolingbroke ‡ and Ormond might also have caballed with Berwick and the agents of the Pretender, with a view of obtaining the dismissal of Oxford, and the support of the Jacobites. They might, as soon as they had secured themselves in their places, have followed the example of Oxford. In corroboration of this argument, it appears from a letter of Erasmus Lewis to Swift §, that Bolingbroke, at this period, con-

* See Memoires de Berwick.

† See Macpherson's Papers, vol. 2.

‡ Etough's Minutes of a Conference with Horace Walpole, at Putney, August 6 and 20, 1752.

—534.

§ Swift's Letters, vol. 1. Letter 150.

the principal leaders of the Whigs, and Walpole * himself admitted that Bolingbroke had held a meeting with them for the purpose of arranging the terms of a coalition, at which he gave the most positive assurances of his good wishes to the Protestant succession; but when it was insisted, that as a proof of his sincerity, the Pretender should be removed to such a distance as would prevent his interference in the affairs of England, the minister declared his inability to obtain the consent of the queen, to what she deemed the banishment of her brother. To attempt to fathom the politics, and unquestionably trace the designs of the artful and unprincipled Bolingbroke, would be difficult, even at this time, when party prejudices have subsided, and when many lights have been thrown on his conduct. But at the period here alluded to, the task was impracticable. How could the Whigs discriminate whether his intrigues with Marlborough, and his attempts to open a negotiation with some of their leaders, were intended merely to counteract the designs of Oxford, or to deceive them; or whether his correspondence with Berwick and the Pretender, was carried on with the view to promote or frustrate their schemes?

But such conjectures do not strictly apply to the question in agitation, Whether intrigues were not employed to set aside the Hanover line, and to induce the queen to assist in placing the Pretender on the throne? That simple fact is incontrovertible, and affords a justification of the Whigs, and of those Tories who were friends to the Hanover line, that having knowledge of such cabals, or even entertaining strong presumptions of them, they should use every means to defeat those attempts. They were bound in duty to propose such strong measures as would awaken the Protestants to a sense of their danger, and force the queen and ministry to consent to such acts, as were most likely to secure the succession; and they were to come forwards repeatedly and continually, that the passions of men might not be suffered to sleep, and that the danger might be made manifest to the discernment of the public. They are therefore sufficiently vindicated for setting a price on the Pretender's head; for consulting with the agents of Hanover; for advising Baron Schutz to demand the writ for the electoral prince to be called to the house of peers, and for insisting that he should be permitted to reside in London, although Oxford told the duke of Kent, that to bring over one of the electoral family, would be to bring the queen's coffin to her view. Here then is an ample justification of the Whigs, and of Walpole their zealous partisan, for so decisively

Refuted.

Friends of the succession vindicated.

* Etough's minutes of a conference with Sir R. Walpole.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

Alarming
state of af-
fairs.

endeavouring to counteract, in every legal manner, the designs of the king and the Jacobites.

The last six months of the reign of Anne, was a fearful period ; alarms, during which the kingdom stood on the “ *perilous edge* * ” of commotions and foreign invasion. The nation was divided into parties, each differently interested in regard to the succession of the line. The Jacobites, hostile and exulting ; the Tories, disaffected, or lukewarm ; the Whigs, always active, yet occasionally desponding, to avoid a civil war, yet determined to hazard their lives and fortunes in support of their religion and constitution ; and it is impossible to read the Stuart and Hanover Papers, in Macpherson’s Collection for 1714, the Memoirs of Berwick, and of the duke of Hamilton, without shuddering at the dangers which seemed likely to burst forth from the violence of the parties, and the collision of discordant opinions.

The earl of Chesterfield † was firmly convinced, that if the queen had reigned three months longer, the religion and liberties of this country would have been in imminent danger. The patience of the Whigs was nearly exhausted ; their apprehensions increased, and induced them to form associations for the protection of their religion and liberties ; the people caught the alarm ; the Tories began to see the danger, and to act in conjunction with the Whigs for the general security.

At this important crisis, the queen was seized with a sudden fit of apoplexy, which took away her senses, and soon occasioned her death. Though she had dismissed Oxford, she had not yet nominated his successor, and while Bolingbroke and his party were wavering, the dukes of Argyll and Somerset entered the council chamber without being summoned, and demanded for an examination of the physicians. The queen being pronounced in great danger, they represented that it was necessary to fill up the vacancy of lord treasurer, and the duke of Shrewsbury was proposed. The whole assenting, the queen, during a lucid interval, delivered to him the will. The privy counsellors being summoned, Somers, and other friends of the Protestant succession, made their appearance ‡ ; and every precaution was taken to quiet the public mind, and to ensure the accession of the electress of Hanover. Anne expired on the first of August 1714 ; and Bolingbroke expresses himself in a § letter to Swift, dated August 3 ; “ The earl of Oxford was removed on Tuesday ; the queen died on Sunday. What is this, and how does fortune banter us ! ”

Death of
Queen Anne.

* Milton.

† Life of Lord Chesterfield, p. 13.—Letter to Mr. Jumeau.

‡ Tindal.

§ Swift’s Letters, vol. 1. p. 507.

PERIOD THE SECOND:

From the Accession of GEORGE the First, to the Commencement
of the South Sea Scheme:

1714—1720.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

*General State of the European Powers at the Death of Queen Anne, with respect
to their Inclination or Capacity to promote or obstruct the Accession of George the
First.—State of Great Britain.—Character of George the First—not calculated
to promote his Cause.*

NO prince ever ascended a throne under more critical circumstances, and
with less appearance of a quiet reign, than George the First; whether
we consider the state of the European powers, the situation of parties in Great
Britain, or his own character.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

Most of the European powers were at this critical juncture, from motives
of prejudice, alliance, or personal dislike, averse to the interests of the elector
of Hanover; and those who had not taken a decided part against him, with
the exception of Prussia and Holland alone, were indifferent, or incapable of
shewing their friendship.

State of
Europe.

Although Louis the Fourteenth had guaranteed, at the peace of Utrecht,
the right of the house of Hanover to succeed to the crown of Great Britain,
and on the demise of Anne had acknowledged George the First, yet it
was well known that his attachment to the Roman Catholic religion,
his jealousy of England, and a spirit of magnanimity which he greatly affect-
ed, would lead him to assist, if possible, the unfortunate prince, whom
he had once publicly received as the lawful successor of James the Se-
cond. Though too much exhausted by the late war, to follow his inclina-
tions by any active interference, he connived at the preparations making by

France.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

the Pretender within his dominions; and should any domestic insurrection take place, so as to give hopes of success, he was ready to pour in the force of France to promote a restoration.

Spain.

Spain, at this period, was little more than a province of France, a sovereign Philip the Fifth acted in perfect subordination to the will of his grandfather Louis the Fourteenth, to whose assistance he was prior to 1714 indebted for the crown. He nourished a violent antipathy to the house of Hanover, and though prudence and necessity induced him to acknowledge him king of Great Britain, yet his principles and wishes led him to favour the Stuarts.

Portugal.

John the Fifth reigned in Portugal, a prince who possessed greater talents and activity than any of the sovereigns of the line of Braganza. But he was already involved in a war with Spain, and though he had some confidence in the promises of assistance from George, yet he depended more on the mediation of France, and was, of course, liable to be biassed by the councils of Versailles.

The Emperor.

The emperor Charles the Sixth, the head of the house of Austria, was disappointed as well as incensed at the manner in which the peace of Utrecht had been concluded, maintained a gloomy reserve with respect to the alliance with England, and might fairly be supposed rather inimical than otherwise to the interests of George, whose growing influence in Germany, he watched with a jealous circumspection. He well knew that the party in England favoured the accession of the house of Brunswick, was extremely well satisfied, and believed that the Elector himself was indifferent to his elevation, on these accounts he was unwilling to offend his competitor by too great a disposition to his interest*. In consequence of these motives, he refused to ratify the peace at Rastadt, to guaranty the succession of the family of George the First to the crown of Great Britain.

Prussia.

The most powerful among the German princes was Frederic William the First of Prussia, who was included in the entail of the act of settlement, and had espoused Sophia Dorothea, the daughter of George the First. Upon the first news of Anne's illness, he repaired to Hanover, and assured his father-in-law, the elector, that he would assist him with all his forces to maintain his title to the British throne. But the Prussian monarch had not yet established, on a firm basis, his great system of military tactics, and his whole force could only tend to preserve the electorate of Hanover, but

* Macpherson's State Papers, vol. 2. p. 638.

† Lord Townshend to Count Starenberg Goerde, October 24, 1725.

not afford any effectual assistance to the king of Great Britain in resisting external enemies, or curbing internal opposition.

Chapter 9.

1714.

Holland.

The United Provinces, enfeebled by exertions above their strength, bending under a vast load of debt, considering themselves shamefully deserted by England, and unwilling to contract new engagements which might again expose them to fresh dangers and new debts, yet were the only state who acted with sincerity and spirit. Conscious that the restoration of the Pretender would be followed by a strict union between France and England, which might prove destructive to their interests, they promoted, to the utmost of their power, the accession of George the First, and received him, as he passed through their country to take possession of his throne, with every demonstration of respect and affection.

Russia was just emerging from Asiatic indolence and barbarity, and rising into importance under the amazing efforts of Peter the Great, who already entertained those jealousies against George the First, which afterwards nearly broke out into open hostilities. But at present he was engaged in a war with Sweden and Turkey; and was not in a situation either to obstruct or assist the accession.

Russia.

Sweden, involved in a destructive war with Russia, Denmark, and Poland; in which she had lost her fairest provinces, and seen her veteran soldiers either exterminated or taken prisoners, was no longer in that proud situation which enabled her to give law to the north. Irritated against George the First for the claims which he had begun to make on Bremen and Verden, Charles the Twelfth would have opposed his accession, if his circumstances and situation had permitted. But he was at this critical moment resident in Turkey, uselessly displaying those instances of romantic bravery and inflexible obstinacy, which characterised rather the leader of a savage horde of Tartars, than a sovereign of a great and civilized people.

Sweden.

Denmark, under the wise administration of Frederic the Fourth, was just beginning to recover from the deep wounds inflicted by a long war with Sweden, which still continued; her commerce languishing, and the resources of the state almost exhausted. The king might consider the accession of his ally, who had long aspired to share the spoils of Sweden, a fortunate occurrence. But Denmark was more likely to derive assistance from George, than George to receive any effectual succour from Denmark. Frederic was at the best but a passive friend, and only in a situation to defend his own territories and conquests, and not to act offensively in his favour.

Denmark.

Poland, under the feeble domination of an elective monarch, was declining fast in the political scale of Europe. Augustus the Second was almost a cypher, totally governed by Peter the Great, to whom he owed his re-establishment,

Poland.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

Italy.

The Pope.

Savoy and
Piedmont.

blishment, and in no respect sufficiently considerable to affect the success in England.

The small sovereignties, and petty republics of Italy, were of little consideration.

The Pope, no longer a great temporal prince, took no active share in the general affairs of Europe. Innocent the Thirteenth, however inclined to favour the Pretender, possessed neither influence or strength sufficient to obstruct the succession of the Protestant line; he could only offer an asylum to a prince, whose father had sacrificed his crown to his religion; and after being driven from place to place as an outcast from society, though himself fortunate in being permitted to hide his proscribed head within the capital of the ecclesiastical dominions.

Savoy and Piedmont, from their critical situation between France and the Milanese, and from the transcendent talents and military skills of several sovereigns, particularly Emanuel Philibert, and Charles Emmanuel the First, had risen from a petty principality into consequence. Victor Amadeus, the reigning prince, no less ambitious and enterprising than his great predecessors, had followed their policy, in selling himself to whoever bid the highest for his assistance and alliance, and in making gradual small acquisitions, which increased his strength, without giving umbrage to his neighbours, acting in conformity to a proverb, which he is said to have applied to the Milanese: "I must acquire the Milanese province by degrees, as I eat the leaves of an artichoke."

Of all the European sovereigns who had acceded to the grand alliance, Victor Amadeus alone had reason to be contented with the measures of the British cabinet. Anne had zealously exerted herself in his favour, and obtained for him, at the peace of Utrecht, the kingdom of Sicily; that of the duchies of Montferrat and Milan, by the cession of which Louis XIV. had detached him from France, and the guaranty of the succession to the crown of Spain, on the failure of the male line of Philip the Fifth. Yet these important advantages had not satisfied the aspiring views of Victor Amadeus. His consort, Anna Maria, grand-daughter of Charles the First of England, and the next in succession after the children of James the Second, protested against the act of settlement, as contrary to her right by hereditary descent; and he considered the elector of Hanover as usurping a throne which belonged to his son. He, therefore, looked with an evil eye on the peaceful accession of George the First, and with that versatility of policy that marked his character, was already meditating a return to his old alliance with France, which he afterwards effected.

Such was the general situation of Europe at the death of queen Anne ; George had more enemies than friends, and his sole dependance was placed on the spirit and vigour of his partisans in England ; but the state of this country was not such as to augur success.

The reigns of his two immediate predecessors had been stormy, distracted with factions, and opened a gloomy prospect of a new reign, under a foreign sovereign. The contending political parties, exasperated by long opposition, and all the injuries attending alternate elevation and depression, expressed their rancour in mutual accusation and virulent reproach.

State of parties.

The Tories, who, though extremely powerful, both in respect of numbers and property, were censurable for their arrogance, in pronouncing themselves, exclusively, the landholders and proprietors of the kingdom, reviled their opponents as a faction which leaned for support on the enemies of the church and monarchy, and on the bank, and monied interest, which was as they said raised by usury, and founded on corruption.

The Whigs retaliated by charging the Tories, who formed the bulk of the nation, and included most of the country gentlemen and parochial clergy, with an attachment to the French, and hatred of the Dutch ; with all the crimes with which they loaded the framers of the peace of Utrecht, and with favouring the interests of Louis the Fourteenth, because he supported their idol the Pretender. It is a great injustice however, to confound, as they did, the characters of the Tories and Jacobites ; for although many of the Tories had, from motives of pique or disappointed ambition, as well as from affection, corresponded with the court of St. Germain, yet it did not follow that they all uniformly entertained the scheme of restoring the dethroned family : Yet the inculpation was not divested of all shew of truth ; the general principles of the Tories tended strongly to enforce passive obedience and non-resistance, and as they disapproved the doctrines which occasioned the revolution, censured by implication the Protestant succession. The Jacobites too, disappointed in their towering hopes, favoured this popular misapprehension, by endeavouring to connect the cause and opinions of the Tories with their own. The strong feature of distinction between the Whigs and Tories was, that the Tories were willing to have assented to the resumption of the crown by the Pretender, if he would have embraced the Protestant persuasion ; while the Whigs, armed with just diffidence and distrust, and considering the political principles in which he had been educated, no less hostile to their liberties, than his faith was to their religious persuasion, would admit of no compromise, nor on any terms agree to his restoration.

The

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

The Tories were reinforced by the Jacobites, who possessed great abroad, and influence at home; who had acquired an unlimited ascendency over the Clans of Scotland, full of resentment at the act of union, which destroyed their independence; and amongst the Papists of Ireland, who formed the bulk of that kingdom, and were attached to their cause by every tie of religion and consideration. The Whigs, to balance the influence of the Jacobites and Catholics, had the assistance of the whole body of Dissenters, who, irritated by the severity of the schism bill, passed under the influence of the Tories, fled from a Protestant monarch, and a Whig administration, a repeal of the Test law.

The Whigs now raised themselves from the despondency into which they had been thrown by the measures of the four last years of the queen's reign, and hailed the new reign as the commencement of their triumph. The Tories, divided and irresolute, concealed their chagrin in a shew of submission, but they meditated new manœuvres for the attainment of power; and the Jacobites, precipitated from the exultation of hope too fondly indulged in, submitted for the present, but resolved to embrace the first opportunity of breaking into open rebellion.

Character of
George the
First.

George the First, who, by the death of his mother, the electress Sophia, succeeded to the throne of Great Britain, in virtue of the act of Settlement, was ill calculated by nature, disposition, and habit, to reconcile these jarring parties, and remove the unfavourable impressions, which were natural for all people to entertain of a foreigner, destined to rule over them. He was already fifty-four years of age, and had been long habituated to the court of a different description from that of England, to manners and customs wholly repugnant to those of his new subjects. He was below the middle stature, and his person, though well proportioned, did not impress dignity or respect. His countenance was benign, but without much expression, and his address awkward. He was easy and familiar only in his hours of recreation, and to those alone who formed his usual society; not fond of attracting notice, phlegmatic and grave in his public deportment, hating the splendour of majesty, shunning crowds, and fatigued even with the first acclamations of the multitude. This natural reserve was heightened by his ignorance of the language, of the first principles of the English constitution, and of the spirit and temper of the people. Without taste for the fine arts, except music, or the smallest inclination for polite literature, men of talents had no

* Sophia, grand-daughter of James the First, and widow of Ernest Augustus, elector of Hanover, died the 8th of June, 1714, only two months before queen Anne, in the 84th year of her age.

to expect from his influence, that patronage which had attended them in the preceding reign.

It was currently reported that measures were preparing to evade the laws which excluded foreigners from honours and employments. The example of William was not forgotten, who by his largesses to Bentinck, Zulestein, and Keppel, had given so much umbrage, and George had several mistresses, of whom two the most favoured were expected to accompany him to England, with a numerous train of Hanoverian followers, eager to share the spoils of the *promised land*; to set up a court within a court, and an interest opposite to the true interest of England. It was also maliciously circulated, that he was * indifferent to his own succession, and scarcely willing to stretch out a hand to grasp the crown within his reach; a report which materially lessened his influence in foreign courts, and tended to produce reciprocal indifference in the English. But he had excellent qualities for a sovereign, plainness of manners, simplicity of character, and benignity of temper; great application to business, extreme exactness in distributing his time, the strictest œconomy in regulating his revenue; and, notwithstanding his military skill and tried valour, a love of peace; virtues, however, which required time before they were appreciated, and not of that specious cast to captivate the multitude, or to raise the tide of popularity.

From this representation, it appears that few circumstances concurred to favour his quiet accession; and yet no son ever succeeded his father on the throne, after an uninterrupted succession of a long line of ancestors, with greater tranquillity than George the First. This success was principally owing to the abilities, prudence, activity, and foresight of the great Whigs, and to the precautions which they had always taken, and now took, to promote the succession in the Protestant line, with whom the Hanoverian agents in London concerted their mode of conduct, and to whom the elector of Hanover, from the first news he received of the queen's death, wholly resigned himself and his cause.

* Macpherson, vol. 2. p. 638.

Period II.

1714 to 1720.

CHAPTER THE TENTH:

1714.

Proceedings in Parliament on the Death of Queen Anne.—Accession of George I.—First.—Transactions at Hanover.—Artful Policy of the King, in his Conduct towards the Two Parties.—His Arrival in England.—Formation of a Whig Ministry.—Walpole Paymaster of the Forces.—Inveteracy of Parties.

Proceedings
on the death
of the queen.

THE queen had no sooner expired, than the great officers of the crown, in whom the regency bill had vested the executive power, together with certain peers, appointed by the elector of Hanover, in three instructions written by himself, took upon themselves, as lords justices, the administration of affairs till the arrival of the new sovereign, and summoned the council.

Proclamation
of king
George.

George was proclaimed king, with the usual solemnities, in the city of London and Westminster; no disorder was committed; or opposition made; and the earl of Dorset was dispatched to carry to Hanover the news of the inauguration, and to attend him to England. The proclamation took place with equal tranquillity at Edinburgh and Dublin.

August 1.
Meeting of
Parliament.

On the Sunday, when the queen died, the parliament met pursuant to the act which regulated the succession. Sir Thomas Hanmer, the speaker being absent, Bromley, secretary of state, moved that the house should adjourn on Wednesday; but sir Richard Onslow opposing this motion, from the consideration that time was too precious to be lost at so critical a juncture, prevailed, that the house should adjourn only to the following morning, which was carried. The three succeeding days being occupied in taking the oath, on the 5th the lords justices came to the house of peers, and the chancellor, in their name, made a speech, declaring that they had, in virtue of the act of parliament, and in conjunction with the privy council, proclaimed the elector of Hanover king; and as several branches of the public revenue had expired on the demise of the queen, recommended the house of commons to make such provisions as were requisite to support the dignity and honour of the crown.

Both houses unanimously agreed to addresses of condolence for the death of queen Anne, and of congratulation on the accession of the king.

when, in the house of commons, the secretary of state, in moving the address, expatiated on the great loss which the nation had sustained, Walpole seconded the motion, but proposed "to add something more substantial than words, by giving assurances of making good all parliamentary funds;" and Onslow, member for Surry, observed, that the force of the address ought to consist, not in condolence only, but congratulations, and in assuring the king of their firm resolution to support his undoubted title to the crown, and to maintain the public credit. The Whigs acted with extraordinary prudence at this crisis: For when the renewal of the civil list was brought into the lower house, the Tories, under pretence of extraordinary zeal for the new government, proposed one million, which was £. 300,000 more than the revenue of the late queen. But the king's friends, apprehensive that the Tories acted insidiously, either with a view to conciliate favour, or for the purpose of reproaching him afterwards, as oppressing the nation by a higher revenue than his predecessor had enjoyed, did not second the motion, and it was dropped. A bill passed, fixing the same sum which had been granted in the last reign, with two additional clauses, moved by Horace Walpole, for the payment of arrears due to the troops of Hanover, and for a reward of £. 100,000, from the treasury, to any person apprehending the Pretender, if he should attempt to land in any part of the British dominions.

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1714.

Walpole supports the motion for an address.

The king having returned an answer to the addresses, the lords justices came again to the house of peers on the 23d of August, and the chancellor intimated his majesty's great satisfaction at the loyalty and affection which his subjects had displayed: other loyal addresses were made in reply; the royal assent was given by the lords justices to the money bills, and parliament prorogued to the 23d of September; and thus ended a session, which was conducted with a degree of tranquillity and unanimity long unknown to their proceedings, and seemed to give a happy omen of a quiet and prosperous reign*.

The king's answer to the addresses.

During these transactions, the eyes of Europe and the expectations of England were naturally directed to Hanover. On the 26th of July, the earl of Clarendon, a zealous Tory, who was appointed envoy extraordinary from the queen, had arrived in that capital; but it was not till the 4th of August that he received his first audience at the palace of Herenhausen. At this interview the elector affected to repose the highest confidence in the promises of the queen, expressed a sense of the obligations which his family owed to her, and

Transactions at Hanover.

* Journals—Political State of Great Britain.—Chandler.—Tindal.

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professed himself unacquainted with the demand made by the elector the writ for calling his son to the house of peers *. Craggs, who had with an account of the queen's dangerous illness, arrived there on the 1st and instantly went to Herenhausen with the letter from the privy council and on the same night three † other expresses came over, two to the king and one to Clarendon, with the news of the queen's death. On the receipt of this intelligence, the king summoned his council; and baron Polnitz, who was at Hanover, adds, "many people were pleased to say, that the king hesitated whether he should accept of the august dignity; but for myself I fancy that the voyage to England was more the subject of the council's deliberation, than the question whether the crown should be accepted."

When the council was over, he was complimented on his acceptance, and gave orders to make preparations for his departure, which he justly delayed, that he might obtain from England such information as might assist him in the difficult task of forming a new administration, which he managed with great prudence and dexterity.

Prudent conduct of the king.

George had already conducted himself with so much address, that Clarendon does not appear to have entertained the smallest suspicion of his disinclination to the Tories; and Bernsdorf and Goertz, his two ministers at Hanover, corresponded respectively with each party. Bernsdorf espoused the Whigs, Goertz the Tories, so that each party expressed their hopes of being called into office. The expectations of the Tories were farther raised by the conduct of Halifax, who, disappointed of the king's lord high treasurer, by the influence of Townshend, proposed the appointment of a motley ministry, recommending, among other Tories, Bromley, chancellor of the exchequer, and Sir Thomas Hanmer one of the lords. The hope that the king would accede to this, or some other arrangement, and their "dependance on real credit and substantial power under the present government ||," kept the Tories in suspense, and prevented their forming any establishment. Yet, though the king did not seem averse to the Whig cause, he appears at that very time to have formed, with the assistance of Bothmar, his agent in London, an administration entirely of Whigs; but of this he gave no public indication till after his arrival at the Hague, which occasioned a report, that he was not before deciding which party he should select a cabinet. At the Hague, the attachment of the Whigs was manifest, by the publication of the appointment of

* Correspondence, period 2d. Clarendon's Letter to Bromley—August 7th.

† Tindal, v. 18, p. 388.

‡ Memoirs of Polnitz : Article Bolingbroke's Letter to Sir Wyndham.

Townshend to be secretary of state, with the power of nominating his colleague. In fact, Horace Walpole *, the brother in law and confidential secretary of lord Townshend, by whose recommendation Stanhope was afterwards associated with Townshend as secretary, positively denies that it was ever the king's intention to form a Tory administration.

The most agreeable accounts being transmitted by Bothmar, that things wore a favourable appearance, the king continued a fortnight at the Hague, receiving the affectionate congratulations of the states, and the compliments of the foreign ministers, and settling with the Whigs the mode of his future conduct, and the members of the new administration to be appointed on his arrival in England.

At six in the afternoon, on the 18th of September, amidst a large concourse of nobility and gentry, George the First landed at Greenwich. He particularly distinguished the Whig lords, did not pay the smallest attention to Ormond and Harcourt, and only slightly noticed Oxford, who was on the following morning admitted to kiss his hand.

Arrival of
the king.

The appointment of the new administration had been already announced by previous arrangements. The lords of the regency declared Addison their secretary, and ordered all dispatches to be forwarded to him; to the great mortification of Bolingbroke, who was obliged to stand at the door of the council with his papers, without obtaining admittance. On the 28th of August, an express had arrived from Hanover, bearing orders from the king for removing Bolingbroke from his office of secretary of state; the dismissal was attended with evident marks of displeasure from the lords of the regency, Shrewsbury, Somerset, and Cowper taking the seals, and locking the doors of his office; and on the 17th of September, before the king's arrival, Townshend was sworn principal secretary of state in his place. Stanhope was appointed the other secretary; Cowper, lord chancellor; Marlborough, commander in chief; Wharton, privy seal; Sunderland, lord lieutenant of Ireland; Halifax, first lord commissioner of the treasury; Devonshire, lord steward of the household; Orford, first lord commissioner of the admiralty; master of the horse; Walpole, paymaster of the forces, friends provided for in subordinate offices. The principal offices were filled with Whigs; Shrewsbury, who had been the principal of defeating the schemes of Bolingbroke, having resigned his office of lord treasurer, and lord lieutenant of Ireland, was created duke of the stole; and the only Tory who was admitted into a h

New ministry.

* Letter to Etough, September 21, 1752. Correspondence, Pe

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and treated with any degree of confidence, was Nottingham, who declared president of the council. A new privy council was appointed, cabinet formed, consisting principally of Marlborough, Nottingham, land, Halifax, Townshend, Cowper, Stanhope, and Somers, who, on of his increasing infirmities, was incapable of filling any active department.

The King, or rather Townshend and Walpole, to whom the formation of the new ministry was principally attributed, have been severely censured for excluding the Tories, and confining all places of trust and confidence exclusively to the Whigs, thus making the monarch the leader of a party, and the sovereign of his people at large.

Inveteracy of
parties.

It may not be improper to remark, that in treating of past events we are too apt to form a judgment of things according to principles of the justice or fancied perfection, without considering the temper of the times, or making sufficient allowance for the powerful operation of opinions and prejudices. When we consult contemporary accounts, we find that so general was the inveteracy which subsisted between the Whigs and Tories, that they would have been content with less than the whole power; and such was the temper of the nation at the time of the king's accession, and the animosity derived from the clash of civil and religious opinions, that it would have been impracticable to form a stable coalition between the two parties. In fact, the scheme of uniting the Whigs and Tories was incompatible; and so late as 1742, when Pulteney attempted to form his new administration on an extended and liberal principle, he would not venture to introduce Tories; he declared that the basis of the ministry must be a Whig trunk grafted with Tory branches; and that gradually the grafts would become more and more numerous and thriving. Nor was it till 1744, when the junction ludicrously called the Broad Bottom was arranged, that the great body of Whigs and Tories could be brought heartily to coalesce.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH:

1714—1716.

Rise and Character of Lord Townshend.—Intimacy with Walpole.—Meeting of the new Parliament.—Walpole takes the Lead.—Draws up the Report of the secret Committee.—Manages the Impeachment of Bolingbroke—Ormond and Oxford.—Motives for that Conduct.—Rebellion.—His Activity and Services.—Appointed First Lord of the Treasury, and Chancellor of the Exchequer.—Proceedings in Parliament.—Trial and Execution of the Rebels.

CHARLES Viscount Townshend, who now took the lead in the administration, was eldest son of Sir Horatio Townshend, who was so highly instrumental in forwarding the restoration of Charles the Second, that in 1682 he was created a peer. Charles took his seat in the house of peers in 1696; and being of a Tory family, attached himself so strongly to that party, that he signed the protest respecting the impeachment of the Whig lords. But his zeal for the Tories soon abated, and even took a contrary direction, to which the representations and conduct of his friend Walpole greatly contributed. He then attached himself to Somers, and acted so cordially with the Whigs, that when William formed a new administration, principally composed of that party, a rumour was confidentially circulated, that he was appointed privy seal *. In 1706, he was nominated one of the commissioners for settling the union with Scotland; in 1707, captain of the yeomen of the queen's guard, and in 1709, accompanied the duke of Marlborough to Gertruydenberg, as joint plenipotentiary, to open a negotiation for peace with France; he was deputed in the same year ambassador extraordinary to the states general, and concluded with them the barrier treaty. Soon after the change of the Whig administration he resigned his embassy, was removed from his post of captain of the yeomen, and censured by the Tory house of commons for having signed that treaty. During the early part of the reign of queen Anne, on account of his youth, he had acted only a subordinate part, and was not considered as one of the great leaders of the Whig

Character of
lord Townshend.

* Letter from Henry Bland to Robert Walpole, February 3, 1701-2. Orford Papers.

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interest, but towards the close of that reign, his services and decisive conduct raised his consequence; and he gained great accession of character, and party, on being prosecuted at the same time with the duke of Marlborough.

Though naturally of slow parts, he had acquired from long experience a talent that rendered him an able man of business, which was the sole object of his ambition; he was rough in manners, impatient of contradiction, of a sanguine disposition, impetuous, and overbearing; though inelegant in language, and often perplexed in argument, yet he spoke sensibly, and with a thorough knowledge of his subject *. He was generous, highly disinterested, unblemished integrity, and unsullied honour: initiated in diplomatic transactions during the congress at Gertruydenberg and the Hague, he contracted too great an attachment to negotiation, and fond of visionary schemes, he was too apt to propose bold and decisive measures, which the more temperate and pacific disposition of Walpole was continually employed in counteracting.

During the two months, which immediately preceded the queen's death, and the interval which ensued between that event and the arrival of the king, he seems to have secured and governed † Bothmar, and the other Hanoverian agents in England; to have supplanted Sunderland and Halifax, and to have obtained the entire confidence of the king, of which he had previously acquired a very distinguished share, by his great reputation for integrity and ability, and by the recommendation of pensionary Heinsius, Slingelandt, and other able men of the Dutch republic, and by his uniform adherence to the cause of the Protestant succession.

Walpole's intimacy with Townshend.

An early and intimate connection had been formed between Townshend and Walpole; they were distantly related, neighbours in the same parish, and educated at the same school; they joined the same party, acted under the same leaders, underwent the same persecutions, and co-operated in the same opposition. The marriage which Townshend had contracted with Dorothy Walpole, in 1713, drew closer the bonds of amity, and added another tie of blood to the connection of party. Walpole had performed too essential services to the Hanover family, and was too able a speaker in the house of commons, not to occupy a distinguished situation at the accession of George the First, and his connection with Townshend facilitated his promotion. Soon after the landing of the king, he was appointed, as already mentioned, paymaster general of the forces, to which was added

* Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son, vol. 2. p. 258.

† Macpherson's Papers, vol. 2.

paymasterſhip of Chelſea hoſpital; very lucrative employments, in which he conſiderably improved his fortune.

A diſſolution taking place on the 5th of January, the new parliament met on the 17th of March, and a great majority were Whigs. The temper of the governing party, in regard to the proſecution of the Tories, and the reſolution of calling the late miniſtry to account, evidently appeared from the proclamation for diſſolving the parliament. The addreſs of the lords contained expreſſions highly injurious to the queen's memory, and warmly condemned the peace, and meaſures of the late adminiſtration. But the addreſs of the commons was ſtill ſtronger. "The ſpeaker having reported to the houſe the king's ſpeech, Walpole expatiated upon the great happineſs of the nation, by his majeſty's ſeaſonable acceſſion to the crown; recapitulated the miſmanagements of the four laſt years, and concluded with a motion for an addreſs of thanks to the king, conformable to the ſeveral heads of the ſpeech *." The motion being carried with only one diſſenting voice, it was drawn up by Walpole, and contained theſe ſtrong expreſſions †: "It is with juſt reſentment we obſerve, that the Pretender ſtill reſides in Lorrain, and that he has the preſumption, by declarations from thence, to ſtir up your majeſty's ſubjects to rebellion; but that which raiſes the utmoſt indignation of your commons is, that it appears therein, that his hopes were built upon the meaſures that had been taken for ſome time paſt in Great Britain. It ſhall be our buſineſs to trace out thoſe meaſures whereon he placed his hopes, *and to bring the authors of them to condign puniſhment.*" Part of this addreſs being warmly oppoſed by the Tory members, on the grounds of its being a reflection on the late queen: Walpole obſerved, ‡ "that nothing was farther from their intentions, than to aſperſe the late queen; that they rather deſigned to vindicate her memory, by expoſing and puniſhing thoſe evil counſellors, who had thrown on that good, pious, and well-meaning princeſs, all the blame and odium of their counſels." He added, "that they muſt diſtinguiſh between cenſuring miniſters, and condemning the peace in general, and condemning particular perſons. That they might, in equity and juſtice, do the firſt, becauſe the whole nation was already ſenſible that their honour and true intereſt had been ſacrificed by the late peace; that in due time they would call them to account, who made and adviſed ſuch a peace; but God forbid they ſhould ever condemn any perſon unheard."

Walpole ſhewed, in a ſubſequent debate, his judgment no leſs than his zeal. For when Sir William Wyndham endeavoured to prove that the

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1715-
New parliament.

Moves an addreſs, reflecting on the meaſures of the late queen.

Conduct towards Sir William Wyndham.

* Journals.

† Chandler.

‡ Chandler.

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king's proclamation was of dangerous consequences to the very being of the parliament, and being called upon to explain himself, but refusing, many members exclaimed, "To the Tower! To the Tower!" Walpole, fearing that he would acquire popularity, should that measure be adopted, observed, "I am not for gratifying the desire which the member, who occasioned this great debate, shews of being sent to the Tower; it would make him of considerable consequence: but as he is a young man of good parts, who sets up as a warm champion of the late ministry, and one who was in all their transactions, I would wish him to be in the house when we inquire into the conduct of his friends, both that he may have an opportunity to defend them, and that he may be a witness of the fairness with which we shall proceed against those gentlemen, and that it may not be said, that we take any advantage against them." It was principally owing to his influence, that although Sir William Vane continued to refuse making any explanation, he was only ordered to be reprimanded by the speaker.

Prosecution
 of the ex-
 ministers.

The threats of the address, which implied a resolution of prosecuting the late ministers, were soon carried into execution. The papers of Bolingbroke, Strafford, and Prior, having been seized and examined, secretary St. John presented to the house of commons, those which related to the negotiations for peace and commerce; and a committee of secrecy, consisting of twelve members, being appointed to examine if there was any just cause for impeachment, Walpole was nominated chairman, and took the lead in the whole business. He drew up the masterly report, which is remarkable for the perspicuity of style, method of arrangement, and for digesting, in so small a compass, such a mass of materials. William Shippen having triumphantly insinuated, that notwithstanding the clamour which had been raised against the late ministry, the secret committee would not be able to bring any of them to the bar of their guilt, Walpole indignantly, though intemperately observed, that he wanted words to express the villany of the late Frenchified ministry, and it was judged proper to hasten the report. Accordingly, on the 9th of January, only two months after the house had ordered the committee to reduce the papers into order, Walpole read the report, which he continued with little interruption five hours.

His report as
 chairman of
 the com-
 mittee of se-
 crecy.

It was divided into two parts. The first stated the clandestine negotiations with Mesnager, the French plenipotentiary, which produced a set of preliminary articles; the one private and special, for Great Britain only, the other general, for all her allies: the deceitful offers of the

plenipotentiaries at Utrecht, with the connivances of the ministry; the negotiation in regard to the renunciation of the Spanish monarchy; the suspension of arms; the seizure of Ghent and Bruges by the duke of Ormond, and his acting in concert with the French general; the journey of Bolingbroke to France, for arranging a separate *peace*; the negotiations of Shrewsbury and Prior, and the precipitate conclusion of the treaty of Utrecht, with a view of criminating the ministers for having deserted their allies, and betrayed the interests and honour of their country. The second part stated, their secret transactions with the Pretender; a letter from Oxford to the queen, containing a brief account of public affairs from August 6, 1710, to June 8, 1714; the desertion of the Catalans, and some other papers of less importance*.

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On the conclusion of the report, Sir Thomas Hanmer moved, that the consideration should be adjourned to the 21st; and being seconded by the friends of the late administration, Walpole observed, "he could not but wonder, that those gentlemen who shewed so much impatience to have the report laid before the house, should now press for adjourning the consideration of it. That as for the committee of secrecy, as they had not yet gone through all the branches of their inquiry, he could have wished some longer time had been allowed to peruse and digest several important papers. That for this purpose, they would have deferred three weeks or a month, the laying their report before the house; but that some gentlemen having reflected on the pretended slowness of the committee, since the said report was now before them, they must e'en go through with it †." The motion of Sir Thomas Hanmer being negatived, Walpole impeached Bolingbroke of high treason, and other crimes and misdemeanors; and the question being carried with only a slight opposition of two members, Lord Coningsby stood up and said, "The worthy chairman of the committee has impeached the hand, but I impeach the head; he has impeached the clerk, I impeach the master;" and immediately impeached Robert earl of Oxford and Mortimer, of high treason. On the 21st of June, Stanhope also impeached Strafford of high crimes and misdemeanors.

Impeachment of Bolingbroke, Oxford, and Strafford.

The current of opinion ran so violently against the late administration, that these prosecutions were carried without much difficulty, and with little opposition. The drawing up of the articles of impeachment was entrusted to the committee of secrecy, and consequently to Walpole, who, in conjunction with Stanhope, now principally directed the house of commons. The arti-

Walpole draws up the articles of impeachment.

* Reports of the secret committee, in the Journals. Abstract of the secret committee, in Historical Register, from 1714 to 1716,

vol. i. p. 164 to 269.—Tindal, vol. 18. p. 246 to 288.

† Chandler.—Historical Register, v. i. p. 270.

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 Conduct of
 the parties
 accused.
 Oxford's de-
 fence.
 Walpole's re-
 plication.
 Observations
 on these pro-
 secutions.

cles of impeachment were severally carried up to the house of lords. Oxford and Bolingbroke having absconded, were attainted. Oxford acted a manly part, supported his prosecution, and defended his conduct with nity and moderation, and made a calm and firm answer to the accusation in the commons. His defence being transmitted by the lords, was read in the lower house, where Walpole animadverted on it with great acrimony, and drew up a replication.

The prosecution of the leaders of the late administration has been constantly, and in some degree justly, held up by the Tory historians as a striking proof of the spirit of party-resentment and party-vengeance, and is constantly defended by the Whigs. The argument, however, which Oxford advanced on his trial, which his partisans adopted in both houses, and which has been since urged in his justification, that he had acted only in obedience to the commands of the queen, was more specious than solid. If admitted to the utmost latitude, it would establish the position, that those who gave pernicious counsels to the sovereign, might shelter themselves under the sanction of those very commands which they had dictated. If the voice of the sovereign is sufficient to authorize the servants of the crown in executing orders, however illegal, it follows then that the crown would be arbitrary, and as the king can do no wrong, no minister would be responsible for an abuse of the executive power. But there is another argument against the impeachment of the late ministers, far more convincing. It was first urged by Sir William Wyndham, that the peace had been approved by successive parliaments, and declared safe, advantageous, and honourable. Should it be even allowed that the measures of the Tory administration were contrary to the honour and interests of the nation, yet with what pretexts of justice could ministers be punished? our constitution knows no limits to the power of the king, lords, and commons assembled in parliament; and that a subsequent parliament may annul any laws which a former parliament decreed, yet it cannot, and ought not to call any ministers to justice for measures which had been sanctioned by the three branches of the legislature. It is far from my intention or wish, to palliate the injustice, or to sanctify the malignant spirit of party, yet I may be allowed to examine the principles and motives which might have led men of such approved humanity as Townshend, Devonshire, Stanhope, and Walpole, to adopt these severe measures. The Whigs were firmly convinced, that the late queen desired to restore the Pretender, after her death; that Harley and Bolingbroke had, through the secret interest of the Pretender and his agents, obtained the dismissal of the Whig administration; that, with a view to remain in power, they found a

with France to be essentially necessary; and that to obtain that peace, they had not scrupled to use the assistance of the court of St. Germain's, and the co-operation of the Jacobites in England; that they had opened secret negotiations with France, in contradiction to the leading principles of the grand alliance, and that, had not the death of the queen prevented their schemes, they would have set aside the act of settlement, and introduced a popish sovereign on the throne; and it must be confessed, that documents now become public, and then strongly suspected by the Whig leaders, place these facts in so clear a light, as to render them absolutely incontrovertible.

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1714 to 1716.

The imprudent conduct of the Pretender increased the animosity of the Whigs, and hastened the prosecution of his supposed adherents. His manifesto, dated August 29, 1714, sent to some of the principal ministers, contained these remarkable expressions: "*Upon the death of the princess our sister, of whose good intentions towards us, we could not for some time past well doubt; and this was the reason we then sat still, expecting the good effects thereof, which were unfortunately prevented by her deplorable death.*" Although from the very nature of the transaction, and the suppression of many papers, they could not procure such legal proof as would be admitted in a court of justice on the condemnation of a criminal, yet the collateral evidence was so convincing, as not to admit of the smallest doubt. It must, however, be confessed, that that part of the report which infers the intention of the late ministry to restore the Pretender, is extremely weak, founded only on vague conjecture and circumstantial evidence; they could not, therefore, venture to lay any great stress on such assertions, as proofs of high treason, but grounded their prosecution on the public events which related to the peace. Though animated by the powerful impressions of a high sense of national disgrace, the recollection of an escape from recent danger, and all the spirit and resentment of party, they confined their attacks to a few victims; they impeached only Oxford, Bolingbroke, and Ormond of high treason, and Strafford of high crimes and misdemeanors.

Imprudence
of the Pre-
tender.

As to Bolingbroke, when Walpole brought forward his impeachment, only one member spoke in his defence, and that member was a notorious Jacobite, and when his flight was reported to the house, the bill of attainder against him passed without a single dissenting voice.

Bolingbroke
attained.

But the situation and character of Ormond were far different. When Stanhope moved for the impeachment of Ormond, Hutcheson, member for Hastings, made a long speech in his behalf, and urged many palliating circumstances; and Sir Joseph Jekyll, whose principles and conduct had always

Ormond de-
fended by his
friends.

* Tindal, vol. 18. p. 251.

proved

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proved him a sincere friend to the Protestant succession, spoke with the same side. The debate continued above nine hours, and Oxford had so many friends, that his impeachment was carried only by a majority of forty-seven. The proceedings against Ormond would not, in all probability, have been conducted with much asperity, had he preserved the moderation which, under his circumstances, would have been becoming; but, contrary, while his conduct was under inquiry before the secret committee, he lived in an unsuitable style of magnificence, affected to court popularity, and saw with complacency his name made the signal of tumult, and of exclamation. Even after his impeachment, Devonshire had arranged a private interview with the king; but far from availing himself of this opportunity, and contrary to the promise extorted from him by his Tory friends, he withdrew from the kingdom, and precluded the possibility of a return to his native country, by instantly entering into the service of the Pretender. Having once embraced that desperate measure, he was too honest and zealous to act like Bolingbroke, and obtain a pardon by sacrificing the interests of his new master, or by entering into a compromise with his prosecutors.

The Whigs
 censured for
 the prosecution of Oxford.

The warmest advocates for the Whigs must admit, that in the prosecution against the earl of Oxford, party resentment was too predominant. He certainly had, either from inclination, fear, policy, or pique, defeated all the attempts of the Pretender's friends, and had been one great cause of the quiet succession of the house of Hanover. On the accession of George the First, he had shewn such unequivocal proofs of his attachment to the triumph*, as disgusted his former friends, and there is not the least probability that had the queen lived, Oxford would have joined the Whigs, and declared himself in favour of the house of Hanover. But it is a justice due to them to shew, and Walpole, to observe, that they strenuously insisted, Oxford should not be accused of high treason, but only tried for high crimes and misdemeanors †; and that they uniformly opposed his bill of attainder, which was no less warmly supported by Marlborough and his adherents. Oxford behaved with great magnanimity during the whole course of his prosecution, and evinced a consciousness of his innocence of the charge of having procured the succession of the Pretender, by abiding his trial.

Commencement of the
 Rebellion.

The multiplicity of business protracted the sitting of the parliament till the 21st of September. Before its prorogation, the tumults and disorders which preceded the Rebellion had already begun. The earl of Mar-

* "The Dragon was thought to shew more joy in proclaiming the king, than was consistent with the obligations he had received from ———. He was hissed all the way by the

mob, and some of them threw halter and coach." Charles Ford to Swift, August 17.
 † Correspondence. Period II.

the standard of the Pretender in Scotland, under the name of James the Third. His party increased, and became formidable from the number of disaffected. In this crisis, the vigilance and activity of the ministers was aided by the zeal of parliament. The habeas corpus act was suspended. The earl of Jersey and lord Landdowne were committed to the Tower; Sir William Wyndham, * and other suspected persons of the house of commons, were apprehended †; large supplies were voted; a considerable body of men marched under the command of the duke of Argyle, and troops were obtained from Holland, by the representations of Horace Walpole, who was deputed to the Hague for that purpose. The reader will find, in the histories of the times, an account of the partial defeat of the Rebels under the earl of Mar at Dumblain, by the duke of Argyle, which effectually prevented their junction with those in the south; the total route of their force at Preston, by general Carpenter; the landing of the Pretender in Scotland; his short display of mock dignity at Perth; his flight from Scotland, and return to France, and the final suppression of the rebellion. To enter into the detail of these transactions, does not fall within the compass of the present work. It is sufficient for the author of these memoirs to observe, that vigour in counsels, exertion in parliament, readiness to forward every supply, to answer every occasion, and to facilitate the measures of government, increased the reputation of Walpole, and endeared him to his king and country.

In consideration of his services and useful talents, he was, on the 11th of October 1715, appointed first lord commissioner of the treasury, and chancellor of the exchequer, vacant by the death of the earl of Halifax, and the removal of the earl of Carlisle, who had immediately succeeded Halifax. He was raised to this high station at a very critical juncture; a rebellion in

Chapter 11.
1714 to 1716.

Walpole's
activity at
this time.

He is appointed first
lord of the
treasury, and
chancellor of
the exche-
quer.

* The following anecdote, relating to the arrest of Sir William Wyndham, places Lord Townshend's firmness of character in a conspicuous point of view.—It was communicated to me by his grandson Lord Sydney. When the intelligence that Sir William Wyndham was concerned in a projected rising in favour of the Pretender, was laid before the cabinet, the duke of Somerset, anxious that his son-in-law, Sir William Wyndham, should not be taken into custody, offered to be responsible for him. The ministers were inclined to give way, for fear of offending a person of the duke's consequence, who, besides his situation of master of the horse, had great influence with the Whigs. The king

was present. The proofs against Sir William Wyndham were so strong, that Lord Townshend deemed it necessary that government should not appear afraid to arrest such an offender, let his rank or connexions be what they might, and moved accordingly to have him taken into custody. Near ten minutes passed in silence before any one ventured to agree with him; when at last, two or three rose at the same moment to second him, and the arrest was decreed. As the king retired into his closet, he took hold of Lord Townshend's hand, and said, "You have done me a great service to-day."

† See State Trials, vol. 1. and Hist. Register.

the

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

Proceedings
in parlia-
ment,

1716.
Feb. 22d.

the kingdom ; a faction secretly aiding and abetting the Pretender ; disunion in the cabinet, and a disaffected body among the Whigs, already preparing schism which broke out in the ensuing year ; and in the latter part of his reign he often adverted to the difficulty he now experienced in conciliating the discordant members of administration, and supporting the house of Brunswick on the throne.

The king's speech ; the zealous addresses of congratulation made by both houses on the suppression of the rebellion ; the impeachment and condemnation of the rebel lords, took up the principal attention of both houses. A considerable time after the meeting of parliament, on the 14th of December, and the petitions in favour of the earls of Derwentwater, Nithisdale, and Kenmure, were urged with such vehemence, and so warmly supported by several members in the house of commons, as irritated Walpole, and induced him to observe, " I am moved with indignation to see that there should be such unworthy members of this great body, who can, without blush, open their mouths in favour of rebels and parricides, who, far from making the least advance towards deserving favour, by an ingenuous discovery of the bottom of the present horrid conspiracy, have rather aggravated their guilt both by their sullen silence and prevaricating answers ; the earl of Derwentwater," added he, " pretended, and affirmed, that he went unpersuaded, and was drawn unawares into this rebellion ; yet to my knowledge, he has been tampering with several people, to persuade them to rise in favour of the Pretender, six months before he appeared in arms * : " and with a view to prevent the house being troubled with any further petitions, which it was determined to reject, Walpole himself proposed an adjournment † to the 1st of March, as it was known that their execution was to take place before that time. The motion met with so strong an opposition, that it was carried only by a majority of seven voices. But Walpole proved his indignation to originate in virtuous and disinterested motives, when he stated to the house, that he had been offered £. 60,000 ‡ to save the life of one single person (the earl of Derwentwater). He also spoke, as one of the managers for the commons, in the prosecution of the earl of Wintown, another of the rebel lords ; and he was in every instance to have urged the necessity of adopting severe measures in the present alarming crisis ; a mode of conduct so opposite to the natural bias of his temper, which always leaned to the side of humanity, as his full conviction, that too much lenity shewn to persons taken in the rebellion, would at this period have proved dangerous to the state.

* Oldmixon, p. 631.

† Political State of Great Britain, 1716.
‡ Second letter to Robert Walpole, Esquire, 30. Chandler.—Tindal.—Etough.

Much has been said of the severity shewn by government to the people who took up arms in favour of the Pretender; and from the accounts of the party writers, it might be supposed, that thousands and tens of thousands had fallen sacrifices to their mistaken principles; that no clemency was shewn to *any* of the rebels; no distinction made between the leaders and their deluded followers. But on a candid investigation of the fact, on the authority of the persons who have condemned these measures, the result will be, that *three* lords were beheaded on Tower-hill; that the judges having found many guilty of high treason in Lancashire, *two-and-twenty* were executed at Preston and Manchester; that of a great number found guilty at London, only *four* were hanged *. Such were the lenient proceedings against the rebels, which writers, adopting a peevish expression of the great Lord Somers, have magnified into the proscriptions of Marius and Sylla; and fascinated by the metaphorical eloquence of Bolingbroke, have taken in its full latitude his malignant assertion, "That the violence of the Whigs dyed the royal ermines with blood †." In fact, no government can exist, if *all* rebels taken with arms in their hands are permitted to escape with impunity; and too great lenity under a new king, who was a foreigner, struggling against a competitor claiming the crown by hereditary right, and supported by all the Roman Catholics, and the principal Tories, would have been not only imprudent, but even inhuman; because it would have held up impunity to those who should raise the standard of insurrection in future. Nor did it ever happen, on the conclusion of a rebellion for a disputed succession, that so few sacrifices were made to the public security.

* Smollet, Vol. 2. p. 311.

† Smollet.—Belsham's Memoirs, vol. 1. p. 113.

Period II.

1714 to 1720.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH:

1716.

Illness of Walpole.—Recovery.—Septennial Bill.—Impatience of the King to Hanover.—Repeal of the restraining Clause in the Act of Settlement.—Understanding between the King and the Prince of Wales, who is appointed Guardian of the Realm.—Departure of the King for Hanover.

Illness and
recovery.

THE activity of Walpole's exertions at this important period, and the great corporeal and mental fatigue to which they subjected him, brought on a severe illness, which nearly hurried him to the grave. His recovery was at length effected, but its progress was so gradual, that he was for a long time, incapacitated from attending to the business of the nation. His restoration to health was forwarded by a temporary retreat to his favourite residence at Chelsea, from which place, he writes to his brother, in the following terms: "I have been here about ten days, and find so great a benefit from the air, that I gather strength daily, and hope as much time more will recover me from the lowest and weakest condition that ever poor mortal was alive in, and I shall be able to get to town and do business again." His friends offered congratulations on the recovery of a man, to whom the Protestant establishment owed so much, and who was the soul of his party, flowed in from all quarters. Numerous verses were made on the event, and Rowe, the great dramatic poet, did not disdain to write a ballad on the occasion*.

May 11th.

Septennial
bill.

During this interval, the septennial bill was brought into parliament. Though Walpole was not able to give this measure his support in the House of Commons, yet, as it had been previously arranged with his concurrence, and as he also constantly opposed the repeal, it has always been justly considered an act of his administration.

This memorable bill, which is to be considered as the bulwark of our civil and religious liberties, because it effectually supported the house of Brunswick on the throne; was undoubtedly one of the most daring uses, or

* See Collection of Whig Ballads, or Pills to purge State Melancholy, part 2.

cording to the representations of its opponents, abuses of parliamentary power that ever was committed since the revolution: for, it not only lengthened the duration of future parliaments, but the members who had been elected only for three years, prolonged, of their own authority, the term of their continuance for four years more. The great body of the Whigs, influenced by these considerations, were, at the first proposition, averse to the measure, and did not agree to give their assistance in support of it, till mature deliberation had convinced them of its necessity. During the debates which took place on this occasion, the arguments of opposition and defence, were not unequal to the importance and dignity of the subject. We, who live at this distance of time, without being heated by the warmth of party, without sufficiently considering the temper and state of the nation, and without weighing the peculiar circumstances which occasioned its introduction, must confess, that in theory, the arguments of those who opposed it, are the most specious and convincing; but if we recur to the events of the times, and the state of the country, we must applaud the wisdom of those who sacrificed speculation to practice. It is the remark of a judicious author, "That the act of septennial parliaments was passed, when the kingdom was threatened with an immediate invasion, when a rebellion had but just been quelled, and when the peace and safety of the nation depended on the use of this power by parliament. Such was the opinion of the people at that time, and the act met with general approbation, from the general conviction of its necessity *."

That the necessity must have been great and evident, appears from the consideration, that it was supported by men of the first rank, independence, and probity in the kingdom; that in the house of lords, where it was proposed by the duke of Devonshire, there were only 36 voices against it, and that, on being sent to the house of commons, there was a majority of 264 against 121. But whatever opinion might be formed of the justice of the right exercised by parliament, in repealing the triennial bill and substituting septennial parliaments, yet it can scarcely be contested, that it has in effect been highly advantageous to the well-being of the legislature, and to the real interests of the nation. The speaker, Onslow, who was no ill judge of parliamentary proceedings, was frequently heard to declare †, That the passing of the septennial bill formed the era of the emancipation of the British house of commons from its former dependence on the crown and the house of lords. From that period it has risen in consequence and strength.

* Adams's Letter against Paine.

† Communicated by Sir George Colebrook.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

We who live to enjoy the benefits of an act, which has greatly contributed to set bounds to faction, which has relieved us from the mischiefs and effects of too frequent elections, and from the interference of foreign powers, which has given permanence and independence to our councils, and prevented those frequent changes of men and measures, which left us open to every variation of public sentiment, to every impulse of craft and artifice, were not too severely to scrutinize the arguments which were used in support of a measure recommended by the necessity of the times, and which subsequent experience has demonstrated to be no less beneficial and prudent, than bold and decisive. The immediate effect is best ascertained by the unceasing course of a desperate faction, whose hopes were at once destroyed by a step which placed at a great distance the chance of influencing the public mind, and of introducing dangerous ferments by the accustomed means of popular delusion. History enables us to ascertain its more remote consequences; and we may fairly consider the permanence of peace, the energy of war, and amelioration of jurisprudence which have resulted to the nation; the wisdom of counsel, the boldness of eloquence, and increase of importance which have distinguished the commons, since the period of its formation, must acknowledge that many of the most inestimable blessings of our constitution are to be attributed to this measure, which originally appeared to invade its first principles. It may be hoped, that there are few persons who would desire to replunge the nation into that feverish state which attends frequent elections in cities and counties, and to revive that perpetual enmity which must arise from the frequent collision of contradictory interests, and the investigation of claims, which hardly be once decided, before they are again contested.

Observation
of lord Somers.

Although a question like this cannot be decided by the opinion of an individual, yet surely the judgment of lord Somers, the constant friend of liberty, and the oracle of the revolution, is intitled to some respect, and the time and manner of giving it, render it peculiarly interesting. While the bill was in agitation, Dr. Friend, the celebrated physician, called on lord Townshend, and informed him, that lord Somers was at that moment restored to the full possession of his faculties, by a fit of the gout, which suspended the effect of his paralytic complaint. Townshend immediately waited on Somers, and as soon as he came into the room embraced him, and said, "I have just finished the work in which you are engaged, and congratulate you upon it. I never approved the triennial bill, and always considered it in effect, the reverse of what it was intended. You have my hearty approbation in this

ness, and *I think it will be the greatest support possible to the liberty of the country* *."

The impatience of the king to visit his German dominions now became so great, as totally to overcome every restraint of prudence, and suggestion of propriety, and imperiously to demand indulgence, though the unsettled state of the public mind, from the effect of rebellion, hardly yet intirely suppressed, and the prejudice excited by the new measures, both of legislation and prosecution, should have opposed insuperable obstacles to his desire. The ministry were considerably embarrassed on this occasion; and drew up a strong remonstrance, representing the inconveniences which would result from the projected journey. This remonstrance, however, not only failed of success, but so far exasperated the king, that he declared he would not endure a longer confinement in this kingdom. Under these circumstances, the ministry could not venture to make any further opposition. When the act was passed, which settled the succession on the house of Brunswick, it was accompanied with various restrictions, limiting the future sovereign in several instances. Some of these restrictions had been repealed during the reign of queen Anne. But the clause which restrained the king from going out of the kingdom, without consent of parliament, still subsisted. It must be allowed to have been a necessary limitation, and its continuance would have been highly beneficial to the true interests of England. For no circumstance more impeded public business, or more alienated the public mind, than the frequent visits which the two first sovereigns of the house of Brunswick made to the electorate of Hanover. This predilection to their native country, was in them both natural and excusable; yet, for the benefit of England, it ought to have been confined within due bounds, although it is not probable that the parliament would ever have withheld their consent, yet the necessity of obtaining that consent would doubtless have checked the too frequent repetition of the demand, and have prevented the absence of the sovereign in times of public emergency. But at the present juncture, it was considered more respectful to obtain a repeal, than to subject the sovereign to the necessity of obtaining a parliamentary consent, for which messages must have been sent to both houses, previous to each voyage. When the motion was made by Sir John Cope, to repeal the restricting clause, and seconded by Hampden, it passed unanimously, not a single member, amongst many who were dissatisfied with the succession of the Hanover line, venturing to make the slightest opposition to the repeal of a clause, which, however conformable to the hopes of the nation, could not but be considered as invidious and disgraceful to the new sovereign. The ministers were

Chapter 12.

1716.

The king resolves to go to Hanover.

Repeal of the restraining clause in the act of settlement.

* Communicated by Lord Sydney, and Charles Townshend, esquire, who frequently heard this anecdote related by their father, the late honourable Thomas Townshend, son of Lord Townshend.

often.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

often obliged to make the most pressing remonstrances, as well to prevent the absence of the king, as to hasten his return; these remonstrances were ineffectual, but always offensive; and Walpole, during the course of his administration, lamented an evil which he had in vain attempted to remove, which nothing but the continuance of the restraining clause, or an abolition of the electorate, could have prevented. Some authors, in treating of long and frequent absences, have thrown out reproachful suggestions to the framers of the act of settlement, for not insisting that a foreign prince should resign his continental dominions before he assumed the possession of the crown. Such a provision did not escape the sagacity of the legislators of the country; it would, most probably, have been carried into effect, but for the obvious uncertainty that no prince would renounce the quiet possession of his continental dominions, however small, to acquire the brilliant, but precarious dignity of sovereign of a large kingdom, exposed to the evils of a powerful faction, and the dangers of a disputed succession. These considerations deterred the framers of the bill from proposing a measure, which would infallibly have frustrated all their other efforts for the preservation of our civil and religious liberties.

The king's
jealousy of
the prince of
Wales.

This difficult point being adjusted, another question, of equal delicacy occurred, which related to the method of carrying on the government during the king's absence. The most obvious and natural method was the appointment of the prince of Wales to the regency; but this measure was frustrated by an unfortunate jealousy which the king entertained of his son.

This misunderstanding had already commenced at Hanover, before the death of Queen Anne. Sophia had often behaved to George the First with distance and reserve, and did not always consult him in regard to the affairs of England. She was extremely fond of her grandson, and in several instances, of great importance, had acted in concurrence with him alone. Particularly, the demand of the writ for him to sit in the house of lords, as duke of Cambridge, was made without the knowledge*, or against the opinion of George the First. This preference of her grandson, naturally created a coldness between the father and son, which was afterwards increased by the artful proposal of the Tories, in voting the civil list, that the separate revenue of £. 100,000 per annum should be settled on the prince of Wales. The motion was negatived by the influence of the Whigs, and the eagerness which the prince expressed to obtain the title and office of

* Communicated by lady Suffolk, who was then at Hanover, to the late earl of Or-

ford. See also Chap. 8. and Clarendon to Secretary Bromley. Correspondence
† Chandler.

augmented the disgust of the king. Conscious that he was instigated in most of his proceedings by the duke of Argyle, his groom of the stole, whose fascinating manners and specious address had gained a great ascendancy over the prince, he insisted on the dismissal of the duke. Under these impressions, the king was unwilling to entrust him with the government, without joining other persons in the commission, and without limiting his authority by the most rigorous restrictions. With a view of forming a regency under those conditions, he submitted his wishes, through the channel of Bernsford, to the council. Their answer on this subject, declared, that, "on a careful perusal of precedents, finding no instance of persons being joined in commission with the prince of Wales, and few, if any restrictions, they were of opinion, that the constant tenor of ancient practice could not conveniently be receded from*." Although he reluctantly submitted to consign to the prince the sole direction of affairs, yet, instead of the title of regent, he appointed him *guardian of the realm and lieutenant*, an office unknown in England since it was enjoyed by Edward the black prince†.

Chapter 13.

1716.

Having made this arrangement, and removed the duke of Argyle from the household of the prince, and from the command of the army in Scotland, he committed to Townshend and Walpole the principal direction of affairs, and, accompanied by secretary Stanhope, took his departure from England on the 9th of July, and arrived on the 15th at Hanover.

Departure
from Eng-
land.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH:

1716.

State and Disunion of the Ministry.—Cabals of Sunderland.—Intrigues and Venality of the Hanoverian Junto.

WE have hitherto contemplated the ministry in which Townshend and Walpole took the lead, in the highest degree prosperous and respectable. It would naturally be supposed, that union and tranquillity in the cabinet were indispensably necessary to produce such wise counsels and vigorous measures, but this supposition is not verified by fact. The seeds of discontent

Disunion of
the ministry.

* Letter from Lord Townshend to Bernsford. Correspondence, Period II.

† Political State of Great Britain, 1716.—Tindal.

had

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

Sunderland
discontented.

had already taken root, and were bringing to maturity by the petty intrigues and selfish cabals of those Hanoverian mistresses and ministers who had lowered the fortunes of the king.

The principal person who fomented the disunion in the cabinet was Charles earl of Sunderland, whose father, Robert, is so notorious in the annals of this country, for his great abilities and consummate treachery. He married Anne, second daughter of the duke of Marlborough, and had a son under his father-in-law, both in a military and diplomatic capacity. The origin of the misunderstanding between him and Townshend, may be traced from the death of queen Anne. At that period, Sunderland, as the leader of the Whigs, and in consideration of his services to the Hanoverian family, was led to expect that he should be placed at the head of the administration, and become the person under whose auspices the new cabinet was to be formed. Bothmar had represented him as a man who had shewn more attachment to the king than any other. He had first recommended Sunderland to be lord lieutenant of Ireland, and Townshend secretary of state; but on Sunderland's expressing his desire to have the first office, Bothmar proposed that Townshend should be provided in another place. This arrangement was first suggested on the 13th of August, and on the 31st of the same month, Bothmar expressed his wishes to Robert, that it might be given to Townshend, although Sunderland had asked for it. In fact, the king was at this period influenced by Bothmar, Bothmar was wholly governed by Townshend, and the new administration was principally settled by him. Although Sunderland was received with singular attention by the king on his arrival, yet it is remarkable, that his name does not appear among the lords justices added in the list communicated by Bothmar to the seven great officers of the realm. The aspiring Sunderland, whom Townshend had hitherto acted a subordinate part, could not resist this preference; though he did not openly shew his disgust, yet he did not take any active part in defending the measures of government; he was before accustomed to make a conspicuous figure in every debate, but now he remained almost uniformly silent; and from the accession of George the First, till the beginning of 1717, his name seldom occurs in the proceedings of the house of lords. He had been nominated lord lieutenant of Ireland, which he considered a species of banishment, and as a place far from his expectations. Soon after the death of the marquis of Wharton, he was appointed privy seal. But his promotion to this high office did not remove his disgust.

This spirit of discontent had not been confined to Sunderland. Nottingham, whose Tory principles could never coalesce with a Whig administration, and whose vehement interference in favour of the condemned rebel lords, had given offence, was dismissed from the presidentship of the council. Somerset was removed from his post of master of the horse, on account of some indiscreet expressions on the arrest of his son-in-law, Sir William Wyndham.

The earl of Halifax had estimated his services and talents at so high a rate, that he expected to have been appointed lord high treasurer: created first-commissioner, he was highly chagrined; nor was his disgust removed by the garter, the title of earl, and the transfer of the place of auditor of the exchequer to his nephew. Inflamed by disappointed ambition, he entered into cabals with the Tory leaders, for the removal of those with whom he had so long cordially acted; but his death, on the 10th of May 1715, put an end to his intrigues*.

Marlborough also was among the dissatisfied. Soon after the death of queen Anne, Bothmar says of him, "He is not pleased that he is not of the regency, and that there is any man but the king higher than him in this country †;" and his disgust was not diminished after the king's arrival: For although he was appointed commander in chief, yet he did not enjoy the smallest share of power or confidence. George the First never forgot, that during the campaign of 1708, when he commanded the Imperialists, Marlborough had contrived, that no troops or supplies were sent to the Rhine, but that the whole force was destined for the army in Flanders, by which arrangement he had been obliged to act on the defensive, and could not distinguish his command by any successful operation against the enemy. In consequence of this disinclination, Marlborough, though commander in chief, could not obtain even a lieutenancy for a friend; and he not unfrequently requested Pulteney, who was secretary at war, to solicit in his room, adding, "but do not say it is for me, for whatever I ask is sure to be denied."

To these discontents Walpole alludes in a private letter to his brother Horace, on the removal of Nottingham ‡. "I don't well know what account to give you of our situation here. *There are storms in the air, but I doubt not, they will soon be blown over.*" In this instance, however, his prediction was not verified; Sunderland increased his party with a number of disaffected persons. He particularly gained among the Whigs, Carleton, Cadogan, Lechmere, and Hamden; courted the Tories; entered into cabals against his colleagues; and

Chapter 13.
1716.

Nottingham returns to the Tories.

Somerset dismissed from the place of master of the horse.

Halifax disaffected.

Dies.

Marlborough dissatisfied.

Walpole too secure.

* Tindal, vol. 18. p. 371. † Macpherson's Papers, vol. 2. p. 640. ‡ Walpole Papers.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

Hanoverian
venality.

Character of
the duchess
of Kendal.

was prepared to use all his efforts, and employ any opportunities which offer, to prejudice the king against them *; nor were such means and opportunities wanting.

One of the greatest difficulties which Townshend and Walpole had to counter, arose from the management of the German junto, who principally governed the king. This junto, at his accession, and for some time consisted of his two mistresses, the duchess of Kendal and the countess of Darlington, and his German ministers and favourites.

Erengard Melesina, baroness of Schulenburgh, and princess of Eberstein was the favourite mistress of George the First, when electoral prince of Hanover, after his separation from his wife, the unfortunate Sophia, princess of Denmark; he is said to have espoused her with his left hand, a species of marriage not uncommon in Germany. She accompanied the king to England, and was, in 1716, created baroness of Dundalk, countess and marchioness of Dungannon of the kingdom of Ireland; and, in 1718, made a peeress of Great Britain, by the title of baroness of Glastonbury, countess of Ingham, and duchess of Kendal †, by which title she is commonly known. Her influence over the king was so considerable, that the different parties in the cabinet, and the leaders in opposition, paid the most obsequious court to her, and even the empress of Germany maintained a private correspondence with her, with a view to induce the king to renew the connection between England and the house of Austria. This ascendancy is the more surprising, when it is considered that she did not possess much beauty of countenance, or elegance of person; for the electress Sophia, pointing her out to Mrs. Horne, said ‡, “Do you see that maukin? you would scarcely believe that she is so captivated my son;” and according to Sir Robert Walpole, (whose opinion, however, as he did not readily speak in any foreign language, and she did not converse in English, must be received with caution) her intellects were mean and contemptible. Money was with her the principal and prevailing consideration, and he was often heard to say, she was so venal a creature, that she would have sold the king’s honour for a shilling advance to the best bidder §. She affected great and constant regularity in her public devotions, frequently attending several Lutheran chapels in the same day. The minister of the Lutheran church in the Savoy, refused to admit her to the sacrament, but she was received at the church of the same communion in the city

* Walpole’s letter to Stanhope, July 30th, 1716.—Correspondence, Period II.

† Extinct Peerage.

‡ From Lord Orford.

§ Etough.—Minutes of a conversation with Sir Robert Walpole.

|| Etough.

His other mistress, whom he brought over with him to England, was Sophia Charlotte, of the house of Offen. She was sister of the celebrated countess of Platen, mistress of the elector Ernest Augustus, and wife of baron Kilmanseck, from whom she was separated. On the death of her husband, in 1721, she was created countess of Leinster in the kingdom of Ireland, baroness of Brentford, and countess of Darlington *. She was a woman of great beauty, but became extremely corpulent as she advanced in years. Her power over the king was not equal to that of the duchess of Kendal; but although she was younger, and more accomplished than her rival, several persons about the court, conceiving her influence to be greater than it really was, ineffectually endeavoured to rise by her means. Her character for rapacity was not inferior to that of the duchess of Kendal.

Chapter 13.
1716.

Character of
the countess
of Darlington.

The Hanoverian ministers who had the principal influence over the king, were baron Bothmar, count Bernsdorf, and Robethon. Baron Bothmar had been the king's principal agent in England during the latter years of queen Anne. By his advice George had almost uniformly acted; and it was principally owing to his interposition, that Townshend was entrusted with the chief power, and became the head of the new administration. Bothmar now conceived that his services could not be too amply rewarded by the minister to whose elevation he had greatly contributed; he took umbrage on finding that his recommendations were often rejected, and that sufficient respect was not paid to his opinion.

Character of
Bothmar.

Count Bernsdorf, of an illustrious family, solid talents, and considerable experience, was the minister whom George consulted in foreign affairs. On his arrival in England, he was anxious to increase his consequence, and improve his fortune. But finding his views opposed by Townshend and Walpole, he became disgusted, and joining with Bothmar and the mistresses, was prepared to forward any attempt which might be made to drive them from the helm.

Bernsdorf.

The party was farther strengthened by the accession of Robethon, the king's French secretary. This man was of a French refugee family, and became private secretary to king William, from whose service he entered into that of the house of Brunswick. He soon became confidential secretary, first of the duke of Zell, and afterwards of George the First, when elector of Hanover, and was the person employed in carrying on the confidential correspondence with England †. This private intercourse gave him a considerable ascendancy over his master; and being a man of address, great knowledge of mankind, and well acquainted with the leading members in both houses of parliament,

Robethon.

* Extinct Peerage.

† Macpherson's Papers, vol. 2.

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1714 to 1720.

he was enabled to act a conspicuous part. His situation with the rendered him insolent and presumptuous; his necessities were great, and his venality was so notorious as to excite the displeasure, and call forth the remonstrances of Townshend and Walpole; consequently, he became the inveterate enemy, zealously promoted the views of Sunderland, and attached himself to those who were labouring to obtain their dismissal.

Two Turks
in the service
of the king.

To these persons of ostensible consequence, must be added two Turks, known by the names of Mustapha and Mahomet*. They had been taken prisoner by the Imperialists in Hungary, and had served the king when electoral prince who was wounded in that campaign, with such zeal and fidelity, that he brought them to Hanover, brought them to England, and made them pages of the back-stairs. Their influence over their master was so great, that their names are mentioned in a dispatch of count Broglie to the king of France, as possessing a large share of the king's confidence. These low foreigners obtained considerable sums of money for recommendation to places.

Rapacity and
ambition of
these persons.

These mistresses, ministers, and favourites, coming from a poor election, considered England as a kind of land of promise, and at the same time as a precarious a possession, that they endeavoured to enrich themselves with as much as possible with the utmost speed†. With this view they sold their influence over their master at a high price, and disposed of all the places and honours which the king could confer, without the intervention of his English ministers. The venality arose to so great a height, as obliged Walpole to remonstrate against them; but the king almost sanctioned the abuse, by replying with a "I suppose you are also paid for your recommendations ‡." Private emoluments, and concealed advantages, did not however satisfy their rapacity; they began to aim at the honours of rank and pre-eminence. The ladies were desirous of being made peeresses; Bothmar and Bernsdorf, aspired to a seat in the house of lords; while Robethon, affected to content himself with the title of baronet. To these pretensions, which the conduct of Walpole had sanctioned, the act of settlement presented an insuperable barrier.

* Pope has mentioned one of these Turks in terms of approbation, in his moral essays, Epistle 2nd, to a lady.

"From peer or bishop 'tis no easy thing,

"To draw the man who loves his God, or king,

"Alas! I copy (or my draught would fail)

"From HONEST MAH'MET, or plain parson
"Hale."

Portraits of the two Turks are on the great

stair-case in Kensington palace. Lysons's Environs of London, vol. 3. p. 103.

† During the whole reign of George II. First, after the resignation of the duke of Marlborough, no master of the horse was appointed, the profits of the place were appropriated to the duchess of Kendal. The emoluments of the mastership of the buck hounds, were reserved for one of the Germans.

‡ From Lord Orford.

Chapter 13.
1716.

terest soon enabled them to discover that the regulations of that act did not extend to Ireland; the baroness of Schulenberg was gratified with the title of duchess of Munster, and the Irish establishment loaded with pensions. But this advancement did not satisfy that ambitious woman, who was less gratified by this title, than irritated against Townshend and Walpole, for opposing her demand of being created an English peeress. The ministers and secretary, animated with a similar rancour, behaved with great insolence towards the leaders of the cabinet, inasmuch that Walpole once, in the presence of the king, rebuked the presumption of an impertinent assertion, by the stern reproof, "*Mentiris impudentissime**." In consequence of these repeated altercations, the Hanoverian crew endeavoured to counteract, by their intrigues, the influence of Townshend and Walpole, and infuse into the king's mind, such suspicions and prejudices as, assisted by other intrigues, ended in the dismissal of those able ministers.

Resisted by
Townshend
and Walpole.

These, and many other mischiefs, which were the necessary consequences of the introduction of a foreign family, cannot be concealed or controverted. Yet, while we relate and deplore them in their full latitude, let us not so far forget the blessings derived from the same source, as to overlook our escape from still greater evils. This event, which was occasionally productive of great inconveniences, was the price paid for the preservation of our religion and constitution. The option was necessarily made between Hanover and Rome; between civil and religious liberty, accompanied by temporary disadvantages, or papal and despotic tyranny, followed by sure and permanent degradation.

* From Lord Orford.

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1714 to 1720.

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH:

1716.

Acquisition of Bremen and Verden.—Alliance with France.

Acquisition
of Bremen
and Verden.

HANOVER now became the centre of the most important negotiations. The two great objects of these negotiations were to complete the acquisition of Bremen and Verden, and to secure tranquillity at home by a strict union with France.

At the peace of Westphalia, the archbishopric of Bremen, and bishopric of Verden, were ceded to Sweden. But their commodious situation, between the territories of the house of Brunswick and the sea, rendered them a valuable object of acquisition to the dukes of Zell and Brunswick, and the princes had formed several attempts to obtain possession, but had all failed of success. At length George the First obtained what his ancestors could not accomplish. Frederic the Fourth of Denmark, having, in 1713, conquered Holstein, Sleswic, Bremen, and Verden, and unable to retain them, or even to resist the arms of Sweden, on the return of Charles the Twelfth from Turkey, found it prudent to cede a part, that he might not be deprived of the whole. He accordingly concluded a treaty, which though unsettled, was not ratified till the 17th of July, 1715, with George, as elector of Hanover; by which it was agreed, that Bremen and Verden should be put into the possession of the king of England, on the condition, of paying £.150,000, and declaring war against Sweden. In consequence of this treaty George joined the coalition against Sweden, and a British fleet was, in 1715, dispatched to the Baltic, with the pretence of protecting our trade against Swedish depredations, but for the real purpose of compelling Sweden to a sum of money as an equivalent for those dominions.

The king of Sweden, provoked at the conduct of George the First, well aware, that in the capacity of elector only, he would not have joined the confederacy against him, directed his efforts of vengeance against the British; his ministers at London, and at the Hague, caballed with the dissatisfied in England, and preparations were making to invade Great Britain with a considerable army, in favour of the dethroned family.

The Pretender did not fail taking advantage of this transaction, to render the new * king odious to his English subjects; and he artfully ob-

* Tindal, vol. 18. p. 451.

in his new manifesto, "Whilst the principal powers engaged in the late wars enjoy the blessings of peace, and are attentive to discharge their debts, and ease their people, Great Britain, in the midst of peace, feels all the load of a war, new debts are contracted, new armies are raised at home, Dutch forces are brought into these kingdoms; and *by taking possession of the Duchy of Bremen, in violation of the public faith*, a door is opened by the usurper to let in an inundation of foreigners from abroad, and to reduce these nations to a state of dependence on one of the most inconsiderable provinces of the empire."

The advocates for Townshend and Walpole, have asserted that they uniformly counteracted the acquisition of Bremen and Verden, and that their opposition to that favourite object of Hanoverian politics, was the principal cause of their subsequent disgrace. But whatever blame or merit results from that measure, attaches to them; for I discover among the papers committed to my inspection, unequivocal proofs, that they approved, in the strongest manner, the proposed acquisition. Slingelandt, afterwards pensionary of Holland, and the confidential friend of lord Townshend, had declared, in a letter dated March 10th, 1717, "As much as the crown of Great Britain is superior to the electoral cap, so much is the king interested to sacrifice Bremen and Verden for a peace, rather than continue any longer in a war." But Townshend was so far from approving the sacrifice, that he observed in answer; "I am of opinion, that every attempt should be made to induce the king of Sweden to make peace, without depriving him of any of his dominions situated out of the empire, for in regard to his German provinces, I must tell you frankly, without any partiality to the pretensions of the king, but simply with a view to the interests of Great Britain and Holland, that we must not suffer Sweden to retain any longer those gates of the empire, which, since the peace of Westphalia, she has never made use of but for the purpose of introducing confusion and disorder, or of turning Germany from the pursuit of its true interests against France." And in another part of the same letter, he adds, "I lay it down as a principle, that for the advantage and tranquillity of Europe, the king of Sweden ought to be deprived of those provinces which have supplied him with the means of doing so much mischief."

Horace Walpole, in his pamphlet, "The Interest of Great Britain steadily pursued," has amply expatiated on this subject, and explained the motives which induced his brother to favour this purchase. "It is the interest of this country," he observes, "that those two provinces, which command the navigation of the Elbe and Wefer, the only inlets from the British seas into Ger-

many,

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

Treaty with
France.

many, and which, in case of any disturbance in the North, are most of protecting or interrupting the British trade to Hamburgh, should be annexed to the king's electoral dominions, than remain in the hands of Denmark, who has frequently formed pretensions on that city; or of Sweden, who has molested our commerce in the Baltic."

The next great object which the British cabinet had in view, was to secure the tranquillity of Great Britain, by forming such alliances with the European powers, as would counteract the intrigues of the Pretender abroad, and deprive him of foreign assistance, and awe his followers into submission.

Townshend and Walpole were well aware, that the danger of internal and interior troubles, did not so much proceed from the efforts of the Pretender, as from the hopes of assistance from France. If the effect of French interposition could be removed, or the effect counteracted, tranquillity would be the necessary and unavoidable consequence. To attain that great end, only two methods could be adopted; the one to form an intimate connection with the emperor and Holland, as to set France at defiance; and the other to secure the friendship of France, and to employ the public and private efforts of that power, which had hitherto either overtly or covertly promoted the restoration of the dethroned family, and encouraged the efforts of the Jacobites in Great Britain, against that very tranquillity and in support of the Protestant succession.

No charge was ever more frequently or more violently urged against the principles of the administration, which Walpole either directed, or in which he co-operated before he acquired the power and influence of prime minister, than that of deserting the house of Austria, our natural ally, for joining with France, our inveterate enemy. I shall therefore lay before the reader the motives which induced the two brother ministers to prefer, at that particular juncture, the connection with France to the union with the House of Austria. To Townshend and Walpole is undoubtedly due the credit or reproach of having first formed the project of that alliance, and of having carried that scheme into execution, in opposition to the opinion of Sunderland and others, who hoped, and in direct contradiction to the first views of the Hanoverian ministers.

Death of
Louis the
Fourteenth.

The death of Louis the Fourteenth, on the 1st of September 1715, given a new aspect to the affairs of France and of Europe, and hastened the final conclusion of those complicated negotiations which the treaty of Utrecht had entailed upon a British administration. Although, during the days of that bigotted and ambitious monarch, the blessings of peace were the constant theme of his conversation, a passion for glory, and the fre-

war, still lurked in his heart. His cabals with the mal-contents in England, his connivance at the intrigues of Ormond and Bolingbroke at Paris, the permission of providing arms and ammunition, and the preparations making at Dunkirk for an attack upon England, were too manifest to escape observation.

Under these circumstances, the earl of Stair, who had superseded Prior in his embassy at Paris, made secret overtures to the duke of Orleans, who was apprehensive lest the king of Spain should wrest the regency out of his hands; and at a meeting with the abbe du Bois, the confidential agent * of the duke of Orleans, promised him the assistance of England to secure the regency to the duke on the death of Louis the Fourteenth, and his succession to the crown of France, should the dauphin, afterwards Louis the Fifteenth, die without issue. Stair reiterated these assurances in a personal interview with the duke; who solemnly pledged himself not to assist the Pretender, and to demolish the sluices at Mardyke. The same offers were renewed, in a still stronger manner, on the death of the king of France. Hints were at the same time thrown out, that the true way to establish a perfect understanding between the two countries, would be to send the Pretender out of Lorraine, and his two adherents, Ormond and Bolingbroke, out of France. But the duke of Orleans had no sooner succeeded in annulling the testament of Louis the Fourteenth, and secured to himself the regency without restrictions, than he ceased to express himself so warm a friend to George the First; but while he gave assurances that he would demolish Mardyke, answered nothing positive with respect to the Pretender, Ormond, and Bolingbroke, and secretly assisted, or at least connived at, the invasion of Great Britain.

Conduct of
the regent.

When these attempts of the Pretender had failed of success, and the standard of rebellion was overthrown, the regent found it his interest † to court the friendship of England, whose assistance might be necessary in securing to him the crown of France in case of the death of Louis the Fifteenth, who was a weak and sickly boy. It was generally suspected that Philip the Fifth would not think himself bound by his renunciation of the crown of France; and as Spain, under the administration of cardinal Alberoni, was beginning to awake from her lethargy, and to make vast preparations both by land and sea, du Bois suggested that the sole purpose of these exertions was to assert the rights of Philip to the crown of France. The regent ac-

* Hardwicke State Papers, vol. 2.

† The sudden change of behaviour of the regent and his court, occasioned by the suppression of the rebellion, appears in lord Stair's Journal, "A la cour on est tout étonné; les plus sages commencent à traiter le Chevalier

de St. George du Pretendant. Il y a deux jours qu'il étoit le roy d'Angleterre par tout, et tout le monde avoit levé le masque. Il n'y avoit plus un seul François, quasi personne de la cour, qui mettoit le pied chez moy."

Hardwicke's State Papers, vol. 2. p. 550.

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1714 to 1720.

Alliances
with the Em-
peror and
Holland.

Vigorous and
prudent mea-
sures of the
British cabi-
net.

cordingly renewed his overtures; but the king, incensed at his former vocal conduct, would not cordially listen to his offers, and opened negotiation with the court of Vienna and the States General for a separate defensive alliance. In consequence of these resolutions, the ancient treaty with the United Provinces was renewed at Westminster on the 16th of February, and a new defensive treaty with the Emperor on the 25th of March, and the British cabinet informed the regent, that the departure of the French tender to the other side of the Alps, was an indispensable preliminary. In vain France attempted to prevent the union of the three powers, by offering to conclude a defensive alliance with Great Britain and the United Provinces, and in case of a war with the Emperor, to observe a neutrality in the Low Countries. The insidiousness of this proposal, did not escape the observation of Townshend, who, in a letter to Horace Walpole, reproached it as chimerical and full of delusion*; and expressed a determination to refuse such alliances with the Emperor and the States General, as would expose the French see, that if they had a mind to fall out with one of them, they would certainly bring the rest into the quarrel.

These vigorous measures alarmed the regent; and induced him now to treat with zeal and sincerity, the friendship of England. Stair availed himself of these favourable sentiments, to promote the success of the negotiation. He sent his address, and the influence which he had gained over the regent, in the umbrage to Torcy, d'Huxelles, and the French ministers who were against the treaty; and they had interest sufficient to have the negotiation tra-

* Letter from Townshend to Horace Walpole, 27th December 1715. Walpole Papers.

"This morning the three mails, which came in from Holland, brought me your letters of the 27th and 31st N. S. which I have read to his majesty, who was glad to see that the French ambassador was disappointed in his hopes of the great effects his proposal of neutrality for the Austrian Low Countries, in case of a war, would have in Holland. Indeed the project seems so chimerical, and is so full of delusion, that it was hardly fit to be seriously offered by one, or received by the other. And none but France, who is used to contrive such amusing schemes, could pretend to propose to stipulate with a third power, a neutrality for the dominions belonging to another, who may not consent to it. For what could such a convention between the Dutch and the French signify, if the emperor, who is master of the

country, should not think it for his interest to mind it? Methinks we are giving opportunity to France to play over the same game after the peace of Ryswick, when the apprehensions of a new war, made the Dutch run into the measures of the Treaty, which was believed might be a wonderful preservative against a war, but proved the source, and the chief occasion of it. We here, the States may be sure, should be fond to engage in a new war, who are the subjects of one at present in our bowels. Therefore, keep to our old maxims, and stand strongly together. The way to avoid war is not to be much afraid of one, and to form such an union among the allies, as will convince the French see, that if they have a mind to fall out with one of us, they will certainly bring the rest into the quarrel."

to the Hague, under the direction of Chateauneuf, the French ambassador, who was hostile to the whole transaction.

Chapter 14.

1716.

Horace Walpole, as minister from England, conducted the business with great ability. He counteracted the intrigues of Chateauneuf, and threw a momentary spirit into the weak and wavering counsels of the Dutch republic. He saw and appreciated the advantages which would result from an alliance with France, in insuring domestic security and foreign tranquillity. He was apprehensive lest the insidious conduct of the regent might so far excite a just, though imprudent indignation in the king and ministry, as to induce them to reject all overtures of accommodation with France, and laboured incessantly to avert what he justly considered so great an evil *.

In a conference with pensionary Heinsius, of which Horace Walpole gives an account in a private letter to Lord Townshend, he details, in a few words, the advantages which would result to the king and nation, from an alliance with France †.

* "If I may venture to give your lordship my own sentiments upon this matter, it is very natural to think that France has two views in her present conduct; 1^o, if the regent should propose to enter into new engagements with his majesty, and the States, and they should accept of his proposal, and make a treaty with him, he may design by that means to amuse and disarm them, and thereby have a better opportunity to attack either; or 2^{do}, if the regent's offers of this nature should be rejected, he may hope to take an advantage of such a refusal, and to insinuate, both in England and Holland, that his majesty has a design to keep his forces on foot; and to quarrell with France; by not forgetting what is past, nor being willing to come to a better understanding with the regent; and if such a notion should once take place, it would have a very ill effect in both countrys; but to disappoint France in these two views, may it not be advisable not to talk directly against an alliance with France, to prevent further mischiefs, at least no further than to show how necessary it is, after the regent's late conduct, to conclude the defensive treaty with the Emperour, preferable to any other whatsoever, since it cannot be expected that his majesty should seek the friendship and confidence of France, after the usage he has received from her; and if the regent should make any proposition for an alliance with his majesty, and the States, it may be so far received as to have it leisurely con-

sidered, and his majesty has reason and right enough to insist upon some certain articles to be made part of that treaty, which, if accepted and executed, may put us out of all apprehensions of the Pretender; and if rejected, will expose the regent's ill designs to all the world. In the mean time, I suppose, that the defensive alliance with the Emperour should be promoted as much as possible, and a force by sea and land, sufficient for our security, be kept up. For as of one side we must take care of not being duped by France, we must on the other avoid being thought desirous of a quarrell, and irreconcilable, even for our own security, and the preservation of the peace."

† "The present situation of affairs in England can by no means be agreeable to him. On one hand, it can't be safe or prudent for his majesty to break his troops and disarm himself, until he has reason to believe, that France has abandoned the cause of the Pretender; on the other side the people of England may grow uneasy at the burthen and expense of a standing army; so that it is certainly the intent both of his majesty and his ministry, to have a friendship and confidence with France, that by having nothing to apprehend from thence, the government may return to its natural constitution of guards and garrisons, and enjoying perfect ease and repose; and I added, that it is evident, by his majesty's whole conduct, that he has done all that is possible for him to gain the regent's amity and good will."

Period II.

1714 to 1720.

Conclusion
of the al-
liance with
France.

August 21.

Townshend had previously adopted the same sentiments; and it was a great measure owing to his suggestions, that the British cabinet opened negotiation for a defensive alliance with France. But the deceitful behaviour of Chateaneuf, and the dilatory proceedings of the Dutch, enforced the necessity of more expeditious and decisive measures. Lord Stair dexterly counteracted the intrigues of the French ministers at Paris, by contriving to place the negotiation in the hands of the abbe du Bois, who repaired to London, where the business was carried on by secretary Stanhope under the immediate auspices of the king. The negotiation was conducted with secrecy and dispatch, that an interval of a few days only elapsed between the arrival of du Bois, and the adjustment of the preliminaries*.

After a few conferences, Du Bois agreed, in the name of the regent, to send the Pretender beyond the Alps, and to demolish the port of Mardyke, called by Lord Townshend, in a letter to Horace Walpole, "that thorn in the side of England," on condition of confirming the article of the treaty of Utrecht, which guaranteed the succession of the crown of France to the house of Orleans, should Louis the Fifteenth die without issue.

* Correspondence, Period II.

† One of the articles in the treaty of Utrecht, expressly stipulated the demolition of Dunkirk, from which port the trade of England and Holland had been incommoded during the late war. The king of France had literally fulfilled this article; but had, at the same time, opened a new canal at Mardyke, which would have been equally prejudicial to the trade of Great Britain. Prior, at that time ambassador at Paris, was ordered to present a memorial, pressing the performance of the 9th article of the treaty of Utrecht. The king of France declared in express terms, that Mardyke was not Dunkirk, and that the treaty of Utrecht did not deprive him of the natural right of a sovereign, to construct such works as he should judge most proper for the preservation of his subjects. The truth is, that the English plenipotentiaries had been extremely negligent; in stipulating the demolition of Dunkirk, it could not be their intention that

another and a better harbour should be constructed on the same coast: But that stipulation had not been inserted; and it was natural that all advantages should be taken by the French, on whom such articles were imposed. According to Lord Stair's account, Prior, embassador at Paris, seemed altogether unknowing of the affair of Mardyke; to have had no instructions while the canal was making, and to have concerned himself no farther about it, since he delivered the memorials. Townshend of Stair prosecuted the affair with great vigour; it now became an object of importance, and Lord Townshend observed to Horace Walpole, "The article of Mardyke is in truth the chief and most essential point of the treaty, the interest of England, for which his majesty has occasion to desire this alliance."

† Tindal, vol. 18. p. 327. 331.

§ Hardwicke's State Papers, vol. 2. p. 5.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH:

1716.

Situation of Affairs at Home.—Conduct of the Prince of Wales.—Precarious and perplexed Situation of Townshend and Walpole.—Departure of Sunderland.—Causes of the King's Displeasure against Townshend and Walpole.—Their Opposition to his continental Politics.—Walpole's Resistance to the Payment of the German Troops.—Intrigues and Arrogance of the Hanoverian Ministers.—Sunderland arrives at Hanover.—Cabals with the German Junto.—Gains Stanhope.—Prevails on the King to dismiss Townshend.

WHILE Townshend was thus successfully employed in restoring consequence and dignity to the British negotiations abroad, and in securing tranquillity at home; while Walpole was conducting the affairs of finance with wisdom and ability, and laying a plan to reduce the interest of the national debt, an active cabal was undermining the favour of the brother ministers; advantage was taken of the king's proneness to jealousy; every engine was employed against them at Hanover; and after a short, but manly struggle, Townshend was dismissed, and Walpole resigned his employment.

This change in the administration, was derived from the misunderstanding between the king and the prince of Wales; the opposition of the cabinet to some of the plans of continental politics proposed at Hanover; the intrigues and arrogance of the Hanoverian junto; and the cabals of Sunderland and Stanhope.

On the king's departure, the prince of Wales had assumed the internal administration of affairs, and such part of foreign transactions as could not be carried on at Hanover. The rebellion having been suppressed, and tranquillity restored, the people became gradually more and more satisfied with the new government. The king's enemies imputed this satisfaction, which was the natural consequence of events, to the good conduct of the prince, and likewise affected to spread abroad, that many acts of grace, the opening of the communication from Dover to Calais, and the dispensing with passports, were owing to the same cause. Reports of his affability and condescension to all persons, without distinction of parties, were circulated, with a mischievous intention to decry the coldness and reserve of the king; and

Causes of the change in administration.

Conduct of the prince of Wales.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

1714 to 1720.

his partial acquaintance with the English tongue, was magnified, and presented as a proof of his earnest desire to accommodate himself to the customs of the nation. He increased his popularity by a short progress into Suffolk, and Hampshire, and addresses were preparing in several places, shewing his wisdom in the administration of affairs, and the graciousness of his manners *. These, and other circumstances, together with the extreme popularity † of the princess of Wales, were not concealed from the king, and could not fail to augment the disgust he had already entertained against his son. The prince still farther offended the king, by shewing particular attention to the duke of Argyle; by his reserve to the ministers in England, and by the court which he paid to the Tories.

While the ministers were thus exposed to the resentment of the king, for their superior attachment to his father, rumours were circulated that their favour was declining with the king. In several letters to Stanhope Walpole bitterly complains of their irksome situation; and, in the extent of his chagrin, compares himself and his colleagues, to galley slaves, chained to the oar ‡. In this uneasy situation, they judged it necessary for the service, to remove the prejudices, and to acquire the confidence of the king, which their prudence and address had no sooner effected, by destroying the credit of Argyle, than they awakened the suspicions of the king, who was feelingly alive to sentiments of jealousy towards his son.

Opposition to
continental
politics.

Another cause of the king's displeasure was, the opposition of the ministers to the continental politics, and their unwillingness to plunge the country into a war with Russia. A dispute had arisen between the duke of Mecklenburgh, in which the duke was supported by Peter the Great, and nobles by the Emperor, the king of Prussia, and George the First, as elector of Hanover. George was influenced by Bernsdorf, who, being a native of that duchy, was irritated against the Czar. Though these potentates embraced contrary sides, their views were the same, the possession of the Baltic territories.

Those who indiscriminately censure the conduct of Walpole, have scrupled to assert, that he embarked in every scheme of aggrandizement, which interest or ambition might suggest to the sovereign: on the contrary, in this affair, he and Townshend displayed that manly resistance which was honour to their character, and refutes such groundless accusation. In the course of this quarrel, Bernsdorf proposed to Stanhope the wild and imprudent project of seizing the ships, disarming the forces of the Czar, by

* Tindal, vol. 19. p. 33. 38.

† Political State of Great Britain, vol. 12. p. 140.

‡ See Correspondence, Period II.

of the Danes, and arresting and detaining his person until his troops should evacuate Denmark and Germany. Townshend reprobated, in the strongest terms, this violent proposal; represented that the prosecution of the war in the north, would be the ruin of England, declared that parliament could not be induced to sanction such a profusion of the public money, for purposes foreign to her real interests; recommended a peace with Sweden, and strongly urged the necessity of obtaining that blessing by some equivalent restitutions. The freedom of remonstrance used on this occasion, incensed the king, who declared that he considered his dearest interests sacrificed to the parsimony of the English ministry. His resentment was still farther inflamed against Walpole, by his declaration of the impracticability of replacing the money advanced for the pay of the troops of Munster and Saxe-Gotha, till the receipt of the sums appropriated by parliament to that use. The anger of the king rose so high, that Walpole was reproached with having broken his promise; the minister vindicated himself with becoming spirit, and declared, that though he could not venture to contradict the king's assertion, yet, that if he had ever made such a promise, it had escaped his memory.

The rapacity and ambition of the German favourites had received several checks from the spirit and inflexibility of Townshend and Walpole; they had hoped to appropriate to themselves large sums from the grant of the French lands in the island of St. Christopher, ceded at the peace, and the duchess of Munster had engaged for a sum of money to procure a peerage for Sir Richard Child, a violent Tory. Both these measures were counteracted, to the great mortification of the whole junto. The haughty and interested mistress, accustomed to domineer over the ministers of the electorate, could ill brook to be thwarted by the English cabinet. Robethon displayed his resentment by the most insolent demands, and petulant reproofs*.

When the earl of Sunderland arrived at Gohre, although he had already secured the powerful aid of the Hanoverian junto, by the promise of obtaining a repeal of the disqualifying clause in the act of settlement, yet his intrigues had no other chance of being attended with success, unless he could gain secretary Stanhope, who owed his appointment solely to the influence of Townshend, and the friendship of the Walpoles, and possessed their implicit confidence. As Townshend himself, on account of his wife's pregnancy, declined going to Hanover, his colleague was to be entrusted with that important service; he was to keep the king steady to his ministers in England, and to watch and baffle the intrigues which might be formed to remove

Chapter 15.

1716.

Influence of
the Germans.Arrival and
intrigues of
Sunderland,
at Hanover.
October 22.Gains Stan-
hope.

* See Correspondence, Period II. *passim*. Political State of Great Britain, vol. 12. p. 477.

them.

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1714 to 1720.

them. Stanhope appeared peculiarly qualified for this task. A long and intimate connection with Walpole, had bound them in the strictest friendship, and when Walpole recommended him to Townshend, he answered for his integrity, as for his own. Stanhope himself had made application for the office of secretary. His frequent residence in camp, and skill in the profession of arms, rendered him, in his own opinion, more a military than a civil station; and when Walpole proposed it, he considered the offer as a matter of raillery, and applied his hand to his sword. It was not till after much persuasion, and the most solemn assurances that his compliance would materially contribute to the security of the administration, that he was induced to accept the post.

One of the principal charges which Stanhope had received from his friends in England, was to be on his guard against the intrigues of Sunderland. He had, under pretence of ill health, obtained the king's permission to go to La-Chapelle. Although, at the time of his departure, he had given them positive assurances of repentance and concern, for his late endeavours to move his colleagues, and after the most solemn professions of friendship and union, had condescended to ask their advice for the regulation of his conduct at Hanover, to which place he intended to apply for leave to proceed. Townshend and Walpole suspected his sincerity; they had experienced his abilities; they knew his ambition, and they dreaded the ascendancy which he might obtain, through the channel of the Hanoverians, over the British. But they implicitly trusted in the sagacity and integrity of Stanhope, and to prevent his appearance at Hanover, or, if he came, to counteract his influence. Stanhope, however, did not follow their directions, for when Sunderland demanded access to the king, instead of opposing, he promoted the interview with all his influence †.

The mode of correspondence adopted, during his continuance at Hanover, sufficiently proved the unbounded confidence placed in Stanhope. He wrote in his own hand, occasional letters of the most private nature, in which he represented the internal state of affairs, the behaviour of the prince, the sentiments of individuals, and the conduct of Bothmar and other persons who were caballing against them. In addition to this mode of communication, Stephen Poyntz, the confidential secretary of lord Townshend, was appointed a supernumary clerk in the secretary of state's office. His principal employment was to lay before Stanhope such occurrences and observations as were presented to Townshend and Methuen, who acted as secretary of state during the absence

* From Lord Orford.

† See Correspondence.—September 8th. Period II.

Stanhope, thought improper to be inserted in their public dispatches. He was never to write but through the channel of a messenger, and Stanhope was requested to communicate these letters to the king, under the strongest injunctions of secrecy, or to withhold them at discretion. With the same precautions, and by the same conveyance, Stanhope was to send, under cover to Poyntz, such particulars as the king might judge improper and inconvenient to be laid before the prince, or the cabinet council*.

In this confidential correspondence, Townshend and Walpole stated freely their objections to the continental politics, declared their dissatisfaction at the interference of the Hanoverians, and their contempt at their venal and interested conduct. They therefore put it in his power to betray their private sentiments, and to increase the aversion of the Hanoverian junto. The seduction therefore of Stanhope from his former friends, was a master-piece of art, as the defection of the person in whom they placed the most implicit confidence, rendered every attempt to baffle the efforts of Sunderland ineffectual, because the mine was not discovered until it was sprung.

At what precise period, or by what inducement Stanhope was gained by Sunderland, cannot be positively ascertained; but from the general disinterestedness of his character, I am led to conclude, that he did not lightly betray his friends, or yield to the suggestions of Sunderland from venal or ambitious motives. The private information I have received, and the letters which passed between Stanhope and Walpole, seem to prove, that Sunderland had convinced him, that the English cabinet were secretly counteracting the conclusion of the alliance with France, that their opposition to the northern transactions was a dereliction of the principles on which the revolution was founded; and he was made to believe that his friend Walpole had broke his word with the king in the affair of the Munster and Saxe Gotha troops.

This coolness of Stanhope towards the two ministers was still further augmented by the transactions in Holland, and the conduct of Horace Walpole, whose frank and open character scorned to disguise his sentiments, and refused to follow orders which he considered as repugnant to honour and plain dealing. He had censured the proceedings at Hanover, in regard to the politics of the north, in terms still stronger than those used by Townshend. He lamented that the whole system of affairs in Europe, should be entirely subverted on account of Mecklenburgh. To Horace Walpole had been intrusted the secret negotiation of the defensive treaty with France, and while it was carrying on, the strictest secrecy was enjoined. Afterwards it was thought prudent to remove the negotiation to Hanover, where, as has been

* Poyntz to secretary Stanhope, 1716. Correspondence, Period II.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

already observed, it was conducted by secretary Stanhope himself, Du Bois, and the proceedings communicated to Horace Walpole. During his progress he had solemnly assured the pensionary and greffier, that the treaty would be concluded separately from the Dutch; but the urgency of the war and the king's impatience to settle the preliminaries before the peace with France could avail himself of the dissensions with Russia to support the king in the affair of Mecklenburgh, rendered it impolitic to wait for the proceedings of the Dutch republic, and full powers were therefore sent to him and lord Cadogan, as joint plenipotentiaries at the Hague, to conclude a treaty with Du Bois, without farther delay. On the receipt of these powers, Horace Walpole earnestly exhorted Sunderland and Stanhope at the Hague to intercede with the king to dispense with his signing the treaty. Stanhope requested lord Townshend to obtain permission of the prince of Wales to return to England, under pretence of ill health. He declared, in the most positive and unequivocal manner, that no consideration on earth should induce him to comply; that he would relinquish all present and future advantage, and lay his life at the king's feet, rather than be guilty of so necessary an action. These repeated remonstrances had their effect, and permission was at length granted from Hanover, that he might depart, and leave to Stanhope the signature of the treaty.

During his residence at Gohre, Sunderland received many marks of royal favour, and by his consummate address soon acquired the full confidence of the king. He found it no difficult matter to select, from the numerous actions in which Townshend had been employed, some apparent instances of disrespect, or of neglect in his department. But it is remarkable, notwithstanding the known zeal of Townshend for the French treaty, though he was the original adviser and promoter of it, and had successfully surmounted the indifference of the king*, the opposition of Sunderland, the disapprobation of Stanhope, and the objections of the Hanoverian ministers, yet it was now alledged as a crime against him, that he had purposely withheld his signature. This extraordinary imputation was conveyed to him by a letter from the king, Stanhope, and Sunderland. The letter from the king was very obliging, but that of Sunderland† will give a striking proof of the influence he had already gained over his master, and the imperiousness of his manner when he delivered his censures in so harsh and authoritative a manner as prime minister in England.

While the answer to the charge, was expected at Hanover, St

* Lord Townshend's letter to the king.

† Correspondence, Period II. No.

urged another subject of complaint, which made a still greater impression on the king, and contributed to the successful issue of his intrigues. He availed himself, with great address, of the misunderstanding with the prince of Wales. He insinuated to the king, that Townshend and Walpole were caballing with the duke of Argyle and the earl of Hly; that their repeated remonstrances to draw him from Hanover, were only so many feints to cover their own insidious designs; that their great object was to detain him abroad; and by urging the necessity of transacting the public business, to induce him to invest the prince of Wales with fuller powers, and enable him to open the parliament, and to obtain an increased, permanent, and independent interest. The effect of these representations was aided by the anxious solicitude which the prince discovered, on all occasions, to open the parliament in person, and by his imprudence in pressing Stanhope, by means of a letter from Townshend, to obtain a speedy answer, announcing the king's definitive resolutions*.

When these insinuations, seconded by the Hanoverian mistresses and ministers, had made a deep impression, with a view to obtain a satisfactory proof of these intentions, Sunderland advised the king to demand of the cabinet council, the heads of the business to be brought forward in the next session; and to declare that he was desirous of passing the winter at Hanover, if any expedient could be adopted for summoning the parliament, and transacting affairs. This demand being forwarded to the minister, the council instantly deliberated on the message, and Townshend, anxious to gratify the inclination of the king, transmitted a favourable answer, by his confidential friend and brother-in-law Horace Walpole, who had just arrived from the Hague. He was so anxious to convey this dispatch with all possible speed, that he quitted London on the 13th of November, the evening of its signature, left the Hague on the 17th, and, travelling night and day, arrived at Gohre on the 22d. He flattered himself with a favourable reception, as the messenger of good tidings, but found the state of affairs far different from that which his sanguine expectations had suggested.

He found the king devoted to Sunderland, and exasperated against his brother and Townshend, to whom the letters on the delay in signing the French treaty, expressive of his high indignation, had just been forwarded. He found him still greatly dissatisfied with their opposition to the plan of northern politics, and disgusted with the backwardness of Walpole to advance the subsidies for his troops of Saxe Gotha and Munster, and so strongly

* Correspondence.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

impressed with the danger of permitting the prince of Wales to open parliament in person, as to declare that no consideration should include to consent to the grant of discretionary powers for that purpose. He Stanhope displeased with the conduct of Townshend, and convinced that negotiations for the peace with France, and for the operations in the north were counteracted by the English cabinet.

The frankness and warmth of his temper, impelled him without reserve to speak plain truths, and to expostulate with a manly freedom and undiminished spirit which astounded Sunderland, and disconcerted Stanhope. He reminded Stanhope in particular, that he owed his high situation to Townshend and his brother; he remonstrated with him for having concurred with his enemies, and affirmed that the suspicions he had entertained of Townshend were totally groundless. He candidly avowed, that if there was incurred by any delay of signing the treaty with France, that must attach solely to him, whose delicacy prevented him from affixing his name to an act, after he had solemnly assured the leading men in England that England would not conclude a separate treaty. He finally acquiesced for the honour and friendship of the brother ministers in England.

Stanhope, affected with these remonstrances, so forcibly urged by his friend, acknowledged that he had been deceived by false suggestions; that he had been misled by Townshend and Walpole in terms of praise and affection; expressed his sense of his obligations to them; requested that what was past might be forgotten, and what was to come might be improved; and promised in the most solemn manner to use his influence with the king, which he represented as very considerable, in favour of those who had committed to him his present trust. Horace Walpole was fully satisfied with these declarations. Stanhope seemed to act in conformity with his promises, and to labour to efface the ill impressions which the king had entertained of his ministers in England. Sunderland appeared confounded; the Hanoverians abated, and the king inclined to recover his former satisfaction and complacency.

While these favourable symptoms of returning good will and harmony apparently prevailed, the answer of Townshend to the charges of deserting the signature to the French treaty, arrived at Gohre. To Sunderland's silent reproofs he did not condescend to make any reply; to Stanhope he wrote only a few lines, testifying his concern and indignation at being betrayed by one in whom he placed the most implicit confidence; but his answer to the king*, contained a full and dignified refutation of the many calumnies and misrepresentations of his enemies; and was written in

Townshend
justifies him-
self.

* November 11. See Correspondence, Period II.

and manner, expressing without disguise the high opinion which he entertained of his own character.

This manly and spirited letter appeared to have its due effect. The king, convinced that he had hastily and unjustly accused lord Townshend, candidly acknowledged his mistake. Stanhope, highly affected with a letter from his friend Walpole, justifying himself and Townshend from the malicious imputations laid to their charge, renewed his protestations of gratitude and devotion, and requested the interference of Horace Walpole to bring about a thorough reconciliation, and to re-establish the former harmony and good understanding. The king commissioned him to convey the strongest assurances of restored confidence in his faithful counsellors in England; and Horace Walpole quitted Gohre with a full conviction that all resentment had totally subsided, and that Stanhope was sincere; and he was as anxious to return to England with the good tidings, as he had been eager to repair to Hanover with the letter from the cabinet council.

His journey being somewhat retarded by unforeseen accidents on the road, and by the difficulty of crossing Maesland Sluys, he did not arrive in London till the 11th of December. He instantly executed his commission; delivered to Townshend and his brother Stanhope's letter, containing the strongest assurances of devotion and friendship; announced the king's favourable declarations; reconciled all parties, and re-established, as he thought, the most perfect harmony and good understanding in the cabinet. But he had scarcely effected this happy reconciliation, before dispatches were brought from Stanhope, announcing the king's command to remove Townshend from the office of secretary of state, and to offer him the lord lieutenancy of Ireland. As Brereton, who conveyed these dispatches without being apprised of their contents, could not have quitted Gohre more than three days subsequent to the departure of Horace Walpole, it was obvious that he had been duped and deceived, that the plan for the removal of Townshend had been then settled; and that the solemn promises, made by Stanhope, were never intended to be fulfilled. A letter from Sunderland to one of his friends, of the same date with those that brought the dismissal of Townshend, fully proved the motives which had influenced the king to countenance this proceeding. It accused Townshend, Walpole, and the chancellor, of caballing with the prince of Wales and Argyle, and forming designs against the king's authority*. In fact, the letter from the cabinet council, which Horace Walpole had conveyed to Gohre, was the death warrant of Towns-

Chapter 15.
1716.

Removal of
Townshend.

* See Townshend's letter to Slingelandt, January $\frac{1}{12}$, 1717. Correspondence.

hend's.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

Townshend's administration. It contained many expressions and opinions unfavourable to the sentiments and inclinations of the king, and who positive to the views of the Hanoverian junto. By the demand, that full discretionary powers should be sent to the prince of Wales, it confirmed an opinion suggested by lord Sunderland, that the object of the ministry in England, was to exalt the son above the father, and to shew that the business of parliament could be transacted by the prince of Wales. It increased the king to such a degree, that the immediate removal of the minister would have been the inevitable consequence, had not the presence of Horace Walpole, and his expostulations with Stanhope, disconcerted, for a short time, the plans of Sunderland. But the favourable impressions which his representations and the manly reply of Townshend had effected, were soon worn off by the suggestions of the Hanoverian junto; the king's jealousy again turned with redoubled force, and Townshend was dismissed.

Townshend declines the lord lieutenancy, Dec. 22.
His letter to the king.

Townshend received the unexpected account of his dismissal with more surprise than indignation. In his letter to the king, he announced his resolution to decline the offer of the lord lieutenancy, with great dignity and

" * I have received with deference, and with the utmost submission, your majesty's commands, intimated by M. secretary Methuen, depriving me of the office of secretary of state. I most humbly demand permission to remind your majesty of what I said, when you did me the honour to confer on me this employment; that I should esteem myself happy, if I had as much care as zeal and affection for your majesty's service, in which case I am sure your majesty would have every reason to be satisfied with my service. I can venture to affirm with truth, that the desire of testifying my gratitude has been the only motive capable of hitherto supporting me under the fatigues of my employment. I am highly sensible of the honour which your majesty confers on me, by condescending to appoint me lord lieutenant of Ireland: But as my domestic affairs do not permit me to reside out of the kingdom, I should hold myself to be totally unworthy of the choice which your majesty has been pleased to make, if I were capable of enjoying the appointments annexed to that honourable office, without doing the duty of it. I trust that your majesty will grant me the permission to attend to the private affairs of my family, which I have too much neglected. I can venture to assure your majesty, that whatever may be my situation, your majesty will always find me a faithful and grateful servant, anxious to promote with all his power, your majesty's service; having the honour of being

* Townshend Papers.—See the French letter, of which this is the original draught. Correspondence.

the most inviolable attachment, fire, your majesty's most humble, most obedient, and most faithful subject and servant."

In a short letter to Stanhope, Townshend calmly reproached him for the duplicity of his conduct, and particularly dwelt on the violation of the promises which he had made to Horace Walpole. But Stanhope had to encounter the still severer reproaches from his confidential friend, Walpole. To him he opened himself in a private letter, which was delivered twenty-four hours before that which announced the dismissal of Townshend. In this apology he was extremely anxious to justify his conduct, and to attribute his acquiescence to the positive commands of the king, who bitterly complained of the warmth and impracticability of Townshend's temper and manner, and he imputed solely to his influence, that the disgrace of the minister was softened by the offer of the lord lieutenancy. He took merit to himself for having removed the prejudices which the king had entertained against Walpole, and earnestly exhorted him to employ his interest with lord Townshend to accept the proffered dignity. The reader will find, in the correspondence, this specious justification of his conduct, and the reproachful answers of Walpole, who after complaining of the hardship with which Townshend was treated, observed, that it was still more unjust to load him with false imputations to justify such ill treatment, and concluded with expressing his resolution to act invariably with him.

Chapter 16.
1716 to 1717.

Walpole reproaches
Stanhope.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH:

1716—1717.

Discontents in England and Holland at the Disgrace of Townshend.—Sunderland and Stanhope, and the Hanoverians, are alarmed.—Apologize for their Conduct.—The King prevails upon him to accept the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland.—Motives for his Conduct.—Townshend and Walpole coldly support Government.—Sunderland increases his Party.—Townshend dismissed from the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland.—Walpole proposes and carries his Scheme for reducing the Interest of the National Debt.—Resigns.—Many of the leading Whigs follow his Example.—Weakness of the new Administration.

THE precipitate manner in which Townshend was removed from the office of secretary of state, was occasioned by a violent burst of resentment and jealousy in the king. But as soon as the first emotions of anger had subsided,

Alarms on
dismissal of
Townshend.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

subsided, and the first raptures of triumph among those who had obtained his disgrace had given way to sober and serious reflection, the whole began to be alarmed at the fatal consequences which seemed likely to follow from that event.

In England.

Reports were transmitted from England, that these measures had excited very serious discontents and mistrusts amongst the monied men in the country; that the greater part of the Whigs were highly exasperated; that of the cabinet council, Devonshire, Orford, Cowper, Walpole, and Methuen adhered inviolably to the fallen minister, and that their secession might create a dangerous division, and distract the plans already concerted for the ensuing session. But above all considerations they dreaded the opposition of Walpole, who took a principal lead in the house of commons; and whose authority for the affairs of finance was so well understood, as to render it difficult to supply his place at the head of the treasury at this particular juncture, he was forming a scheme, which had been highly applauded by the king, and which would reduce the interest of the national debt.

In Holland.

These apprehensions were not confined to England, but extended to foreign parts, and particularly Holland. Many calumnious imputations had been insinuated by Sunderland and the Hanoverians, Townshend wrote a bold and spirited justification of his and Walpole's conduct, and detailed the motives which had occasioned their disgrace, in a letter* to his confidential friend, Slingelandt, afterwards pensionary of Holland; who strongly expressed regret at his dismissal, and concern at his refusal to accept the lord lieutenancy of Ireland.

This letter had a very striking effect over his friends in Holland. Peter van Heinsius, Fagel, Slingelandt, Duvenvoirde, and other leading men of that republic, expressed the most serious concern at the fatal consequences which might result to the united interests of the two countries from this division; and reprobated a measure, which, according to their opinion, was calculated to make the crown totter on the head of the king. The opinion of these men, warmly attached to the English interest, had great weight with George the First, during the short time which he passed at the Hague on his return to England.

Apprehensions of Sunderland and Stanhope.

The terror of Sunderland and Stanhope on this occasion, is fully proved by the extraordinary attention they now paid to Townshend and Walpole. Sunderland apologized for having accused them of caballing with the duke of Argyle; and acknowledged that the report had originated from a misrepresentation of Lord Cadogan, whose hasty temper was well known.

* Correspondence.

pressed his regret and repentance for having written an insolent letter* to the earl of Orford, in which he had insulted the cabinet ministers who adhered to Townshend. Both he and Stanhope vied in making the most artful excuses for their past conduct; declared that they did not in the smallest degree contribute to his disgrace, and threw the whole blame on the Hanoverians. They finally expatiated on the danger to the true Whig interest, if Townshend now deserted his tried friends. Stanhope wrote in the strongest manner to Walpole, and used every argument to appease his resentment. He renewed his asseverations, that the removal of the minister was the sole determination of his royal master, pronounced it an impossible attempt to think of persuading the king to recall his commands; expressed his apprehensions of the dangerous consequences, if Walpole and the other leaders of the Whigs should deem it necessary to resign; and repeated his earnest entreaties to prevent things from being carried to such extremities as he dreaded to think of. He exhorted Methuen, who declared his resolution of acting with Walpole, not to desert the good cause; and throw the king into the hands of the Tories; but solicited his humble interposition with Townshend and Walpole: "They may possibly," he added, "unking their master, or (what I do before God think very possible) make him abdicate; but they will never force him to make Townshend secretary †." On their arrival in England, they acted in the same abject manner, and continued to make the most humble submission.

Chapter 16.
1716 to 1717.

The king himself treated Townshend with the most flattering marks of distinction. He apologized in person for the precipitation with which he had deprived him of the seals, and acknowledged that he had been imposed upon by false reports; he sent Bernsford to represent the fatal effects which would be derived from his opposition at this period. That artful minister offered him, in his master's name, a restoration to his former favour, and every satisfaction which he could desire; declared that the king having taken from him the seals, could not immediately restore them consistently with his own honour; promised that no other changes should be made; intreated him to accept the proffered dignity. He assured him that he might consider that office only as a temporary post, and be permitted to resign it at pleasure, in exchange for any other he should prefer ‡.

Conduct of
the king.
1717.

As it was impossible, after the insolent letters of Sunderland, and the insidious conduct of Stanhope, that he could ever repose any confidence in those who had thus insulted and deceived him, he would have acted a nobler

Townshend
accepts the
lord lieutenancy.

* See letter from M. Duvenvoirde to Lord Townshend.—Correspondence.

† Letter from Stanhope to Methuen.—Correspondence.

‡ Duvenvoirde to Lord Townshend.—Correspondence.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

and a wiser part, had he declined accepting any office. Had he persisted in his refusal of the lord lieutenancy, had Walpole, Devonshire, Orford, Carteret, Methuen, and Pulteney, instantly resigned on his dismissal, the support of Sunderland was so weak and insufficient, that he could not have obtained a majority in parliament. But Townshend, mollified by the solicitations of the king, overcome by the importunities of his friends in Holland, and dread of the consequences of a disunion of the Whigs at this moment, when an invasion from Sweden was threatened, at length accepted the vice-royalty, and remaining in England, assisted at the deliberations of the cabinet. All the friends of Townshend were suffered to continue in their places. Methuen, who had acted as secretary of state during the absence of Stanhope, now succeeded to the southern department. Walpole remained at the head of the treasury: and the great body of the Whigs still appeared to act with unanimity and cordiality.

Proceedings
in parliament.

Feb. 27.

March 4.

In consequence of this apparent amity, the opposition in the commons was so trifling, that the address, thanking the king for laying before the house the paper proving the projected invasion from Sweden, passed unanimously*; and when the estimates relating to the land forces were presented, the motion for putting off the consideration, was carried by a triumphant majority of 222 voices against 57 †.

Fresh divisions.

But the good understanding between the different members of administration, did not long continue. It soon appeared, that the king's promise of favour, made by Bernsford to Townshend and Walpole, were not fulfilled; and that the king placed his chief confidence in Sunderland and Stanhope. New divisions took place; Townshend and Walpole continued to direct the measures of government, but their support was cold and formal, and very different from their former zeal, as plainly shewed extreme dissatisfaction. Sunderland had now considerably increased his party, and thought himself sufficiently strong to carry on the public business, and defy the opposition. In this situation, an open rupture in the cabinet was unavoidable. The first public symptoms of this difference appeared in the house of commons. On a motion that a supply be granted to enable the king to concert measures with foreign princes and states, as may prevent any apprehensions from the designs of Sweden for the future: Walpole, who on all such occasions used to give a great bias to the house, maintained a profound silence, and the resolution was carried by a majority of only 4 voices ‡.

9th.

As it was evident that this mode of inimical proceeding originated

* Journals.—Chandler.

† Chandler.

‡ Journals.

the party of which Townshend was leader, he received, on the same evening, a letter from Stanhope, announcing his dismissal.

The king himself so highly appreciated the services and talents of Walpole, that he dreaded his resignation, and was persuaded to remove Townshend, under the belief that he would still remain at the head of the treasury. When Walpole, therefore, on the following morning, requested an audience, and gave up the seals, the king was extremely surprised. He refused to accept his resignation, expressed a high sense of his services in the kindest and strongest terms; declared that he had no thoughts of parting with so faithful a counsellor; intreated him not to retire, and replaced the seals in his hat. To this Walpole replied, with no less concern than firmness, that however well inclined he might be to obey his majesty's commands, yet it would be impossible to serve him faithfully with those ministers to whom he had lately given his favour, "They will propose to me," he said, "both as chancellor of the exchequer, and in parliament, such things, that if I agree to support them, my credit and reputation will be lost; and if I disapprove or oppose them, I must forfeit your majesty's favour. For I, in my station, though not the author, must be answerable to my king and to my country for all the measures which may be adopted by administration." At the conclusion of these words, he again laid the seals upon the table; the king returned them not less than ten times, and when the minister as often replaced them on the table, he gave up the struggle, and reluctantly accepted his resignation, expressing great concern and much resentment at his determined perseverance. At the conclusion of this affecting scene, Walpole came into the adjoining apartment, and those who were present, witnessed the anguish of his countenance, and observed that his eyes were suffused with tears. Those who immediately entered into the closet, found the king no less disturbed and agitated*.

These removals were soon followed by an almost total change in the administration. Devonshire, Orford, Methuen, and Pulteney, resigned; Stanhope was appointed first lord of the treasury, and chancellor of the exchequer; Sunderland and Addison secretaries of state; the duke of Bolton lord lieutenant of Ireland, and the duke of Newcastle lord chamberlain; the earl of Berkley first lord of the admiralty, and the duke of Kingston retained the office of privy seal, to which he had been nominated in the preceding year, on the resignation of Sunderland, who was made treasurer of Ireland for life.

* This interesting anecdote is taken from a letter of Horace Walpole to Etouh, dated Woburn, October 12, 1751. See Correspondence.

Chapter 16.
1716 to 1717.

Townshend's
dismissal.

Walpole re-
signs.

Further
changes.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH:

1717—1719.

Walpole proposes his Plan for reducing the Interest of the National Debt. Resignation excites warm Debates.—Altercation with Stanhope.—Rise of the baneful Spirit of a systematic Opposition to all the Measures of Government.—Walpole not exempted from that Censure.—His uniform Opposition to the Ministry in the House of Commons.

Walpole's
scheme for
reducing the
national
debt.

THE resignation of Walpole happened at a time when he was at the height of his abilities for finance, in the arrangement of a scheme highly advantageous to the country. When he was first placed at the head of the Treasury, the national debt amounted to 50 millions, and although the interest of money had been reduced in the late reign to 5 per cent, the interest of some of the debts were as high as 8, and none lower, so that the average was 7 per cent. The difference between this interest, and that on private mortgages, presented a *real* fund for the public debt.

This debt was considered under two heads; redeemable, and irredeemable. The redeemable, or such debts as had been provided for by an Act of Parliament with a redeemable interest of so much per cent. the public had the right and power to discharge whenever they were able, either by paying the money for such proprietors as insisted upon money, or by offering new securities in discharge of all former conditions, which, if accepted by the proprietors, was to be deemed an actual redemption of the first debt. As for the irredeemable debts, and short annuities, nothing could be effected without the absolute consent of the proprietors. The only method, therefore, to treat with them was to offer such conditions as they should deem advantageous*.

Upon these principles Walpole gave the first hint of this great scheme, proposing to borrow £.600,000, bearing interest only 4 per cent. and to apply all savings, arising from the intended redemptions, for the purpose

* Tindal, vol. 19. p. 102.

ducing and discharging the national debt, which was the first resolution ever taken in parliament in order to raise or establish a *general* sinking fund *. When he brought his scheme into the house, the project appeared so well digested and advantageous, that the opposition which had been intended was converted into approbation, and every article was agreed to.

Unfortunately for the completion of this great arrangement, the able projector was no longer in office. On bringing in the bill, Walpole gave a hint that he had resigned his places, by saying, "that he now presented it as a country gentleman, but hoped that it would not fare the worse for having two fathers, and that his successor would take care to bring it to perfection †." The difficulties which he had to encounter in this scheme, will appear from the consideration, that no reduction of interest could be made without the consent of the public creditors themselves. It was solely by his address and management, that the companies of the Bank and South Sea agreed not only to reduce their own interest, but to furnish large sums for the discharge of such other creditors as should refuse to comply with an equal reduction; a striking proof of the general esteem in which he was held by the proprietors of the national debts; of their regard for his judgment, and confidence in his equity.

The resignation of Walpole caused a great sensation in the house of commons, where regret for the want of his talents for finance, seemed to prevail, and he was as much inveighed against for resigning, as he was afterwards reviled for remaining in power. His withdrawing from government at this crisis, was called a defection; a criminal conspiracy, with a view to embarrass the king, and to force him to comply with his unwarrantable demands. In answer to these accusations, Walpole justly observed, "That persons who had accepted places in the government, had often been reflected on for carrying on designs, and acting contrary to the interest of their country; but that he had never heard a man arraigned for laying down one of the most profitable places in the kingdom: that for his own part, if he would have complied with some measures, it had not been in the power of any of the present ministers to remove him; but that he had reasons for resigning his employments, with which he had acquainted his majesty, and might, perhaps, in a proper time, declare them to the house. In the mean while, the tenour of his conduct should shew, that he never intended to make the king uneasy, or to embarrass his affairs ‡."

Chapter 17.
1717 to 1719.
March 23,
1717.
April 10th.

Defends his
resignation.

* Historical Register for 1717, p. 150.—
Some Considerations concerning the Public
Funds, 1735, p. 11.

† Chandler.
‡ Chandler.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.
Reflected on
by Stanhope.

Conduct in
opposition.

Mutiny bill.

But a more serious charge was brought against him by Stanhope observed, in the heat of debate, that "he would endeavour to make application, honesty, and disinterestedness, what he wanted in ability and experience. That he would content himself with the salary and lawfulness of his office; and, though he had quitted a better place, he would not quarter himself upon any body. That he had no brothers, nor other relations to provide for; and that upon his first entering into the treasury he had made a standing order against the late practice of granting reversions to places." Walpole, touched with these insinuations, complained in the place of breach of friendship, and betraying private conversation. He frankly owned, that while he was in employment, he had endeavoured to serve his friends and relations; than which, in his opinion, nothing was more reasonable and just. "As to the granting of reversions," he said, "I am willing to acquaint the house with the meaning of the charge which is now urged against me. I have no objections to the German officers, whom the king brought with him from Hanover, and who, as I had observed, had behaved themselves like men of honour; but, that I had known a mean fellow*, of what nation I know not, who is eager to dispose of reversions. This man, having obtained the grant of a reversion, which was designed for his son, I thought it too good for him, and therefore reserved it for my own son. On this disappointment, the foreigner was so impatient as to demand £. 2,500, under pretence that he had been offered that sum for the reversion; but I was wiser than to comply with his demands. I am bold to acknowledge, one of the chief reasons that made me do this was, because I could not connive at some things that were carrying on in the house. When Walpole asserted in the house, that he never intended to employ himself in the affairs of government, he either was not sincere in his professions, or he was, did not possess that patriotic and disinterested firmness which is necessary to resist the spirit of party; for almost from the moment of his resignation, and his return into office, we find him uniform in his opposition to all the measures of government. We see him leagued with the Tories, and with Sir William Wyndham, Bromley, Shippen, and Snell; and we observe not without regret at the inconsistency of human nature, Shippen expressing his satisfaction, that Walpole, when contending for the service of his country, was no more afraid than himself of being called a Jacobite. Those who wanted other arguments to support their debates †. We find even opposing the mutiny bill, that necessary measure for the regulation

* Alluding to Robethon.

† Chandler.

‡ Chandler, vol. 6. p.

military discipline, and in the heat of argument, making use of this memorable expression, "He that is for blood, shall have blood": But though he spoke thus strenuously against the bill, he voted for it, and secured a large majority. Being reproached for this apparent inconsistency, he justified himself by declaring, that although in the debate he was of opinion that mutiny and desertion should be punished by the civil magistrate, yet he was convinced that those crimes should be punished by the martial law, rather than escape with impunity *. We find him taking an active part against the repeal of the occasional and schism bills, notwithstanding his animated declaration, on a former occasion, that the schism bill had more the appearance of a decree of Julian the apostate, than a law enacted by a protestant parliament, since it tended to raise as great a persecution against our protestant brethren, as either the primitive christians ever suffered from the heathen emperors, or the protestants from popery and the inquisition †. In support of the question for reducing the troops, he afforded a striking instance of inconsistency, by enlarging on the common topic of the danger of a standing army in a free nation, and by insisting that 12,000 men were fully sufficient. Yet at this very period, a rebellious spirit continued to subsist in England, and prevailed still more in Scotland. Although the king of Sweden's design to support the Pretender had been discovered, yet he still persisted in his resolution, and waited only for a favourable opportunity of carrying his project into execution. The queen of Spain, and cardinal Alberoni, had revived war in the south of Europe, and were forming vast preparations; and the reception and encouragements given to the adherents of the Pretender, were sure symptoms of their inclinations in his favour. Walpole was well aware of all these circumstances, and could not be ignorant that the reduction of the army must have been attended with fatal consequences, and therefore his support of this measure could be dictated only by party resentment.

Chapter 17.
1717 to 1719.

Schism bill

Speaks for
the reduction
of the
army.

We find him, who had spoken with such heat and force of argument against the makers of the peace of Utrecht, who had been the indefatigable chairman of the secret committee, and had drawn up that able report, which brought such heavy accusations against Oxford, now grown languid and lukewarm in the prosecution, absenting ‡ himself from the committee so often, that another chairman was chosen in his place, and ironically complimented by Shippen, that he who was the most forward and active in the impeachment, had abated in his warmth since he was out of place §. At length, by

Acquittal of
Oxford.

* Hardwicke Papers.

† Chandler, 1712.—Tindal.

‡ Tindal.

§ Chandler.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

Inquiry into
the conduct
of lord Ca-
dogan.
June, 4th.

his connivance, a feigned quarrel as to the mode of proceeding took place between the two houses, and no prosecutors appearing on the day fixed for the continuance of the trial, Oxford was unanimously acquitted.

Walpole also, and the Whigs in opposition, whom Shippen humorously called his *new allies*, zealously supported the inquiry into the conduct of Cadogan, for fraud in the charge of transporting the Dutch troops, at a time of the rebellion, to and from Great Britain. Walpole spoke in the debate near two hours, and in the course of his speech, strained his voice so high, and used such violent efforts, that the blood burst from his nose, and he was obliged to retire for some time from the house *. In answer to his arguments, it was ably observed by Lechmere, that the inquiry was a party measure, the result of party malice, and of the same nature with those which had been instituted against Marlborough, Townshend, and Walpole himself, and he justly observed, that those persons who were now most zealous of the inquiry, had been silent about these pretended frauds while they were in place. But the advocates for the inquiry were so powerful, that it was negatived only by a majority of 10 voices †.

Influence in
parliament.

Supports the
Swedish sub-
sidy.

December
4th 1717.

But whatever were the motives by which Walpole was guided, he considerably influenced the house of commons, during the whole time of his administration. Three days after his resignation, Stanhope having moved for a grant of the sum of £.250,000 to enable the king to concert measures against Sweden; and Pulteney, who had just resigned his place of secretary of war, having spoke with great vehemence against a German ministry, the motion was in great danger of being lost, till Walpole closed the debate by observing, "That having already spoken in favour of the supply, he should now vote for it;" and the motion, in consequence of his interference, was carried without a division ‡. A few words in favour of Mr. Jackson, who had offered to resign his seat in the house by declaring that there were amongst them a set of men who neglected their study and business to embarrass the government, saved him from the Tower. And when Shippen said, "the speech from the throne seemed rather calculated for the meridian of Germany, than of Great Britain," he urged, as the only infelicity of his majesty's reign, that he was unacquainted with our language and constitution; a few palliating expressions from Walpole would have been attended with the same effect, if the inflexible obstinacy had not maintained what he had advanced, and by that obstinacy occasioned his own commitment §. Even in the article of supplies, he occasionally prevailed against the ministry. In speaking for the diminution of the

* Chandler.

† Historical Register.—Chandler.

‡ Historical Register.—Chandler.—T
§ Chandler, vol. 6. p. 157.

estimates, his proposal, that £.650,000, instead of £.681,618, should be granted for defraying the charges of guards and garrisons * was adopted; and in the same session, when the ministry demanded £.130,361, for the pay of reduced officers, and the Tories would only grant £.80,000, Walpole proposed a medium of £.99,000; and his motion was carried without a division.

Chapter 17.
1717 to 1719.

December
9th 1718.

A proposal from the South Sea company, for advancing £.700,000, having been accepted by the house, some of the members were for applying it towards the present and growing necessities of the government. But in a grand committee of ways and means, Walpole, in favour of his sinking fund, insisting that the public debts already incurred should be first considered, a resolution was taken, and a bill afterwards brought in, directing the application of this money, agreeably to his sentiments. "It is indeed plain," adds a virulent pamphleteer, who decried the administration of Sir Robert Walpole, that "in all transactions of money affairs, the house relied more upon his judgment than on that of any other member †."

South Sea
loan applied
to the sinking
fund.

January 12,
1719.

Thus it appears that Walpole, even when in opposition, almost managed the house of commons; and being in opposition he could not gain that ascendancy, by the means of corruption and influence, which were afterwards so repeatedly urged against him, and which the same virulent author calls "some SECRET MAGIC of which he seemed to have been a perfect master." In fact, the magic which he applied, was derived from profound knowledge of finance, great skill in debate, in which perspicuity and sound sense were eminently conspicuous, unimpeached integrity of character, and the assistance of party.

Walpole was no less vehement in his opposition to those measures of government which related to foreign affairs, and which, at this time, embraced a very large field for approbation or censure. The fatal consequences of the peace of Utrecht, placed England in a very delicate situation between the opposite pretensions of Spain and Austria. To satisfy both was impracticable; but the alliance with France, concerted by Walpole and Townshend, and the necessity of opposing the unjust schemes and dangerous intrigues of Cardinal Alberoni, compelled Great Britain to side with the Emperor. Yet though it was generally known that Spain, in concert with Sweden, meditated a descent on our coasts, to overturn the established government, and set the Pretender on the throne; though Philip the Fifth grasped at the pos-

Foreign
transactions.

* Chandler, vol. 6. p. 175. † History of the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole, p. 113.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

cession of Gibraltar and Minorca, and the subversion of the regent's in France; and the ambition of his consort, Elizabeth Farnese, aimed at the acquisition of the Italian provinces for her son; though a Spanish fleet had been sent into the Mediterranean, and a Spanish army had over-run the kingdom of Sardinia, and threatened the reduction of Sicily, no attempt seem to have been wanting on the side of England, to induce the king of Spain, by persuasions, to adopt pacific measures. Immediate negotiations were arranged with the Emperor, France, and the United Provinces, and every proper measure was concerted with those powers to prevent hostilities. Cadogan was sent to the Hague, Dubois came to London, and settled with the ministry, terms for an accommodation between the Emperor and the king of Spain *. George the First even proceeded so far as to propose the cession of Gibraltar †, on the consideration of an equivalent. The Emperor permitted the regent duke of Orleans to make the offer to the king of Spain, if he would ratify the terms specified in the treaty, called the quadruple alliance, passed at London on the 2d of August 1718, between the Emperor, England, and France, and afterwards acceded to by the United Provinces.

By this alliance, the Emperor renounced all claims to the crown of Spain, and consented, that Tuscany, Parma, and Placentia, as male fiefs of the empire, should descend; in default of male heirs, to Don Carlos, eldest son of Philip the Fifth. In return for these concessions, the Emperor was to be gratified with the possession of Sicily, in lieu of which Sardinia was to be allotted to Victor Amadeus. The terms proposed on Philip were, the renunciation of all claims to the dominions of the Emperor, in Italy, and the Netherlands. Three months being allowed Philip for the acceptance of these conditions, Stanhope himself employed the interval in conducting the negotiation in person: he repaired to Paris, after adjusting measures with the regent proceeded to Madrid. In a conference with Alberoni, he represented that a French army was preparing to invade Spain, and that a British squadron, under the command of Admiral Byng, was sailing for the Mediterranean, with orders to attack and destroy the Spanish fleet, if Sicily was not evacuated: he even gave a list of the number and force of the Ships, to convince him of their evident superiority ‡. These overtures were rejected with haughtiness and even contempt. Stanhope's immediate departure from Spain became the signal for war; the French troops advanced, admiral Byng attacked, captured, and destroyed the greater part of the Spanish fleet. The king of Spain,

* Tindal, vol. 19, p. 167.

† See Chapter on Gibraltar, in Period IV.

‡ Earl Stanhope's Letter to Secretary Craggs; Hardwicke Papers.

pointed in his hopes of making an impression on England, by the death of Charles the Twelfth, and the defection of the Czar, was compelled to dismiss Alberoni, and to accede to the quadruple alliance.

During the whole progress of these transactions, Walpole strenuously opposed the conduct of government. On the motion, made by Sir William Strickland, for an address of thanks to the king for his unwearied endeavours to promote the welfare of his kingdoms, and to preserve the tranquillity of Europe, and to assure him that the house would make good such exceedings of men for the sea service, for the year 1718, as his majesty should find necessary *, Walpole observed, that such an address had all the air of a declaration of war against Spain. In the following sessions, when secretary Craggs laid before the house, copies of some of the treaties relating to the quadruple alliance, alluded to in the speech from the throne, Walpole no less warmly objected to the words in the motion for an address, expressing the entire satisfaction of the house in those measures which the king had already taken; he urged, "That it was against the common rules of prudence, and the methods of proceeding in that house, to approve a thing before they knew what it was; that he was thoroughly convinced of, and as ready as any person in that assembly, to acknowledge his majesty's great care for the general peace of Europe, and the interest of Great Britain; but that to sanction, in the manner proposed, the late measures, could have no other view than to screen ministers, who were conscious of having done something amiss, and, who having begun a war against Spain, would now make it the parliament's war: and concluded, by expressing an entire dissatisfaction at a conduct contrary to the law of nations, and a breach of solemn treaties †." When Craggs, in reply, gave an abstract of the articles of the quadruple alliance, Walpole, after reiterating his professions of duty and affection to the king, distinguished between him and his ministers, and expressed his unwillingness to approve the measures pursued, until the treaties on which those measures were founded had been fully and maturely examined ‡. Craggs having presented the translations of the remaining treaties, and the king having sent a message, that he had declared war against Spain, Walpole combated the address, and while his brother Horace made a long speech against the quadruple alliance, and particularly argued that the grant of Sicily to the Emperor in exchange for Sardinia, was a breach of the treaty of Utrecht, he himself exclaimed against the injustice of attacking the Spanish fleet before the declaration of war §. But the answer given to this vio-

Chapter 17.
1717 to 1719.

Opposes the
war with
Spain.

March 17,
1718.

Nov. 11.

Nov. 13.
Dec. 17.

* Chandler.

† Chandler.

‡ Chandler.

§ Chandler, vol. 6. p. 191.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

Objects to
the quadru-
ple alliance.

lent declamation by the ministerial advocates, was not unreasonable. stated, that the blame could attach only to Spain ; the conduct of the king and ministers was agreeable to the law of nations, and to the rules of justice. Was it just to attack Sardinia, without any previous declaration of war, while the Emperor was engaged with the Turks ? Was it just to invade the Netherlands without the least provocation ? And was it not just in the king of France to vindicate the faith of treaties, and to protect the trade of his colonies, which had been violently oppressed ? But though Walpole might be cited in other instances, appear influenced by the spirit of party, yet the arguments which he and his friends urged against the articles of the quadruple alliance, are proved by experience to have been well founded. Although the accession of Spain seemed to complete the peace of Utrecht, the Emperor acknowledged Philip king of Spain, and Philip renounced his claims to the Netherlands, the Milanese, Naples, and Sicily, yet the princes were too much irritated to enter cordially into this scheme of pacification : both parties had made concessions without relinquishing their respective pretensions, and it will be difficult to decide, whether the Emperor or Philip were most dissatisfied with the quadruple alliance.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH:

1718—1719.

Origin and Progress of the Peerage Bill.—Opposition and Speech of Walpole. Bill rejected.

Motives for
the introduc-
tion of the
peerage bill.

IN opposition to the peerage bill, Walpole employed all his talents and eloquence, and bore the most conspicuous part in obtaining its passage. This bill was projected by Sunderland ; his views were, to render the power of the prince of Wales, when he came to the throne, whom the king had offended beyond all hopes of forgiveness, and to extend and perpetuate his own influence, by the creation of many new peers. The unfortunate misunderstanding between the king and his son, which had recently increased to a very alarming degree, favoured the success of his scheme ; and from a motive of mean jealousy, was induced to give up this important and honourable branch of his royal prerogative, and to strip the crown

Chapter 18.
1718 to 1719.

brightest jewel. Sunderland had little difficulty in acquiring a large majority in the house of lords, in favour of a measure which so highly increased their power; the whole body of the Scotch peers in the upper house were gained by the promise of an hereditary seat, and many of the lords, who from form opposed the bill, were secretly not averse to its passing. Being secure of the lords, he relied for success in the house of commons, on the known abhorrence of the Whigs, who formed a large majority, to the creation of the twelve peers, during the administration of Oxford; he had been witness to their repeated and vehement asseverations, that the crown ought in future to be deprived of a prerogative which by that act had brought dishonour on Great Britain, and endangered the liberties of Europe. Even the Whigs in opposition he thought could not venture to obstruct a bill of such a nature, without losing the confidence of their party. Under these circumstances, a bill to limit the number of peers was proposed.

The king sent a message to the house, that, "he had so much at heart the settling the peerage of the whole kingdom, on such a foundation as might secure the freedom and constitution of parliament in all future ages, that he was willing his prerogative should not stand in the way of so great and necessary a work *." In consequence of this message, a bill was brought in "to settle and limit the peerage in such a manner, that the number of English peers should not be enlarged beyond six of the present number, which, upon failure of issue male, might be supplied by new creations: that, instead of the sixteen elective peers from Scotland, twenty-five should be made hereditary on the part of that kingdom; and that this number, upon failure of heirs male, should be supplied from the other members of the Scotch peerage †;" after a strenuous opposition from Cowper, and some partial objections from Townshend and Nottingham, the bill was twice read, and the articles agreed to without division; but on the day appointed for a third reading, Stanhope observed, "That the bill having made a great noise, and raised strange apprehensions; and since the design of it had been so misrepresented, and so misunderstood, that it was like to meet with great opposition in the other house, he thought it advisable to let that matter lie still till a more proper opportunity ‡."

The king's
message.
2d. March.14th.
Bill with-
drawn.

The unpopularity of the measure, and the ferment it had excited in the nation, were the motives which induced Sunderland to withdraw the motion at the moment of certain success in the house of lords. In vain the pen of

Its unpopu-
larity.

* Journals of the House of Lords.—Chandler:

† Lords Journals:

‡ Ibid.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

Walpole's
pamphlet.

Sunderland's
efforts.

Meeting of
the Whigs at
Devonshire
house.

Addison had been employed in defending the bill, in a paper called *Old Whig*, against Steele, who attacked it in a pamphlet intitled *The Plea*, and whose arguments had greater weight with the public. Walpole also published a pamphlet on the same side of the question, "*The Thoughts of a Member of the lower House, in relation to a Project for restraining and limiting the Power of the Crown in the future Creation of Peers* *." In this publication, he explained the nature of the bill, and exposed the views of those who introduced it, with a perspicuity of argument, and simplicity of style adapted to all capacities, and calculated to make a general impression.

The minister, however, did not relinquish his darling bill. During the interval between the prorogation and meeting of parliament, he exerted every effort to engage a majority in its favour. Bribes were profusely lavished, promises and threats were alternately employed, in every shape which his guine and overbearing temper could suggest. He affected to declare, that it was the king's desire, and not the act of the ministry; he did not attempt to conceal that it was levelled against the future government of the prince of Wales, whom he represented as capable of *doing mad things* † when he came to the throne. He declared that the necessary consequence of its rejection would be the ruin of the Whigs, and the introduction of the Tories into the confidence and favour of the king; expressed his surprise that any person who styled himself a Whig should oppose it; and exerted himself in the business with so much heat and violence, that in endeavouring to persuade Middleton, lord chancellor of Ireland, who refused to support the measure in the British house of commons, the blood gushed from his nose ‡.

These efforts were attended with such success, that at a meeting held by the leaders of the Whigs in opposition, at Devonshire house, Walpole found the whole body lukewarm, irresolute, or desponding: several of the party secretly favoured a bill which would increase their importance; others declared, that as Whigs, it would be a manifest inconsistency to object to a measure tending to prevent the repetition of an abuse of prerogative against which they had repeatedly inveighed; those who were sincerely averse to it were unwilling to exert themselves in hopeless resistance, and it was the prevailing opinion that the bill should be permitted to pass without opposition. Walpole alone dissented, and reprobated, in the strongest terms, this resolution as dastardly and impolitic. He maintained that it was the only point on which they could harass administration with any prospect of success.

* Royal and Noble Authors, vol. 2. p. 140.

† Lord Middleton's conversation with Lord Sunderland. Correspondence, Period II.

‡ See Lord Middleton's Letters and notes. Correspondence, Period II.

that he would place it in such a light as to excite indignation in every independent commoner; that he saw a spirit rising against it among the Whigs, and particularly among the country gentlemen, who were otherwise not averse to support government. He said, that he had overheard a member of the house of commons, a country gentleman, who possessed an estate of not more than £.800 a year, declare to another with great warmth, that although he had no chance of being made a peer himself, yet, he would never consent to the injustice of giving a perpetual exclusion to his family. He was convinced, he added, that the same sentiment would have a strong effect upon the whole body of country gentlemen; and concluded his animated remonstrances, by declaring, that if deserted by his party, he himself would singly stand forth and oppose it. This declaration, urged with uncommon vehemence, occasioned much altercation, and many persuasions were made to deter him from adopting a measure which appeared chimerical and absurd; but when they found that he persisted, the whole party gradually came over to his opinion, and agreed that an opposition should be made to it in the house of commons*.

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1718 to 1719.

The bill was again introduced to the notice of parliament, at the opening of the session, by the following artful expressions in the king's speech :

Bill passes the lords.

" If the necessities of my government have sometimes engaged your duty
" and affection to intrust me with powers, of which you have always, with
" good reason, been jealous, the whole world must acknowledge they have
" been so used, as to justify the confidence you have reposed in me. And
" as I can truly affirm, that no prince was ever more zealous to increase his
" own authority, than I am to perpetuate the liberty of my people, I hope
" you will think of all proper methods to establish and transmit to your posterity, the freedom of our happy constitution, and particularly to secure
" that part, which is most liable to abuse. I value myself upon being the
" first, who hath given you an opportunity of doing it; and I must recommend it to you, to compleat those measures, which remained imperfect
" the last session †."

This speech was made the 23d of November; on the 25th, the duke of Buckingham brought the bill into the house, where it was only opposed by Cowper. It was committed on the 26th, ingrossed on the 28th, passed the 30th, and sent down to the house of commons on the 1st of December †. At this period the bill had undergone no alteration from that proposed in the

Sent to the commons.

* See speaker Onslow's Remarks on Opposition. Correspondence.

† Journals.—Chandler.

‡ Journals.—Chandler.

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1714 to 1720.

last session; but it was understood, that in order to conciliate the commons, the king was willing to give up another branch of his prerogative that of pardoning in cases of impeachment, and the lords would waive their privilege of *scandalum magnatum* *.

This memorable bill was read a second time on the 8th of December: a motion made for committing it, gave rise to a long and warm debate, which was principally supported by Craggs, secretary of state, Aislabie, chancellor of the exchequer, Lechmere, attorney-general, and Hampden; it was opposed by Sir Richard Steele, in a very masterly speech, by Smith, Sir John Parkington, Methuen, and Walpole.

Walpole's
speech.

On this occasion he forsook his usual mode of debating, which was usually and seldom decorated with metaphorical ornaments, and, with great moderation, began his speech by introducing this classical allusion:

“ Among the Romans, the temple of fame was placed behind the temple of virtue, to denote that there was no coming to the temple of fame without passing through that of virtue. But if this bill is passed into a law, one of the most powerful incentives to virtue would be taken away, since there would be no arriving at honour, but through the winding-sheet of an old dissolute lord, or the grave of an extinct noble family: a policy very different from that of a glorious and enlightened nation, who made it their pride to hold up to the world illustrious examples of merited elevation,

“ *Patere honoris seirent ut cuncti viam.*

“ It is very far from my thoughts to depreciate the advantages, or to detract from the respect due to illustrious birth; for though the philosophers may say with the poet,

*Et genus et proavos, et quæ non fecimus ipsi,
Vix ea nostra voco;*

yet the claim derived from that advantage, though fortuitous, is so generally and so justly conceded, that every endeavour to subvert the principle, merits contempt and abhorrence. But though illustrious birth forms

* Words spoken in derogation of a peer, a judge, or other great officer of the realm, are called *scandalum magnatum*, and, though they be such as would not be actionable in the case of a common person, yet when spoken in disgrace of such high and respectable characters, they amount to an atrocious injury, which is redressed by an action on the case, founded on

many ancient statutes; as well on behalf of the crown to inflict the punishment of imprisonment on the slanderer, as on behalf of the party to recover damages for the injury sustained.—Blackstone's Commentaries. C. 8.

† See Journals.—Chandler, by mistake the 7th.

undisputed title to pre-eminence, and superior consideration, yet surely it ought not to be the only one. The origin of high titles was derived from the will of the sovereign to reward signal services, or conspicuous merit, by a recompense which, surviving to posterity, should display in all ages the virtues of the receiver, and the gratitude of the donor. Is merit then so rarely discernible, or is gratitude so small a virtue in our days, that the one must be supposed to be its own reward, and the other limited to a barren display of impotent good-will? Had this bill originated with some noble peer of distinguished ancestry, it would have excited less surprise; a desire to exclude others from a participation of honours, is no novelty in persons of that class: *Quod ex aliorum meritis sibi arrogant, id mihi ex meis ascribi volunt.*

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“ But it is matter of just surprise, that a bill of this nature should either have been projected, or at least promoted by a gentleman* who was, not long ago, seated amongst us, and who, having got into the house of peers, is now desirous to shut the door after him.

“ When great alterations in the constitution are to be made, the experiment should be tried for a short time before the proposed change is finally carried into execution, lest it should produce evil instead of good; but in this case, when the bill is once sanctioned by parliament, there can be no future hopes of redress, because the upper house will always oppose the repeal of an act, which has so considerably increased their power. The great unanimity with which this bill has passed the lords, ought to inspire some jealousy in the commons; for it must be obvious, that whatever the lords gain, must be acquired at the loss of the commons, and the diminution of the regal prerogative; and that in all disputes between the lords and commons, when the house of lords is immutable, the commons must, sooner or later, be obliged to recede.

“ The view of the ministry in framing this bill, is plainly nothing but to secure their power in the house of lords. The principal argument on which the necessity of it is founded, is drawn from the mischief occasioned by the creation of twelve peers during the reign of queen Anne, for the purpose of carrying an infamous peace through the house of lords; that was only a temporary measure, whereas the mischief to be occasioned by this bill, will be perpetual. It creates thirty-one peers by authority of parliament; so extraordinary a step cannot be supposed to be taken without some sinister design in future. The ministry want no additional strength in the house of lords, for conducting the common affairs of government, as is sufficiently

* Lord Stanhope.

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

proved by the unanimity with which they have carried through this bill. If, therefore, they think it necessary to acquire additional strength, it must be done with views and intentions more extravagant and hostile to the constitution, than any which have yet been attempted. The bill itself is of an insidious and artful nature. The immediate creation of nine Scotch peers and the reservation of six English peers for a necessary occasion, is of no use; to be ready for the house of lords if wanted, and to engage three of the number in the house of commons by hopes and promises.

“To sanction this attempt, the king is induced to affect to waive a part of his prerogative; but this is merely an ostensible renunciation, founded in fact, or reason. I am desirous to treat of all points relating to the private affairs of his majesty, with the utmost tenderness and candour; but I should wish to ask the house, and I think I can anticipate the answer. Has any such question been upon the tapis, as no man would forgive the authors, that should put them under the necessity of voting against the side*? Are there any misfortunes, which every honest man secretly laments and bewails, and would think the least of mischiefs, should they ever become the subject of public and parliamentary conversations? Cannot numbers hear me testify, from the solicitations and whispers they have met with, that there are men ready and determined to attempt these things if they see a prospect of success? If they have thought, but I hope they are mistaken in their opinion of this house, that the chief obstacle would arise in the house of lords, where they have always been tender upon personal matters, especially to any of their own body, does not this project enable them to carry any question through the house of lords? Must not the twenty-five Scots peers accept upon any terms, or be for ever excluded? Or will twenty-five be found in all Scotland that will? How great will the temptation be likewise to six English, to fill the present vacancies? And shall we then, with our eyes open, take this step, which I cannot but look upon as the beginning of woe and confusion; and shall we, under these apprehensions, break through the Union, and shut up the door of honour? It certainly will have that effect; nay, the very argument advanced in its support, that it will add weight to the commons, by keeping the rich men there, that it will be an exclusion.

“But we are told, that his majesty has voluntarily consented to this renunciation of his prerogative. It may be true; but may not the king have been deceived? Which if it is ever to be supposed, must be admitted in the

* He here probably alluded to the misunderstanding between the king and prince of Wales.

It is incontrovertible, that kings have been over-ruled by the impotency of their ministers to remove, or to take into administration, persons who are disagreeable to them. The character of the king furnishes us also a strong proof that he has been deceived; for although it is a fact, that in Hanover, where he possesses absolute power, he never tyrannised over his subjects, or despotically exercised his authority, yet, can one instance be produced when he ever gave up a prerogative?

Chapter 18.
1718 to 1719.

“ If the constitution is to be amended in the house of lords, the greatest abuses ought to be first corrected. But what is the abuse, against which this bill so vehemently inveighs, and which it is intended to correct? The abuse of the prerogative in creating an occasional number of peers, is a prejudice only to the lords, it can rarely be a prejudice to the commons, but must generally be exercised in their favour; and should it be argued, that in case of a difference between the two houses, the king may exercise that branch of his prerogative, with a view to force the commons to recede, we may reply, that upon a difference with the commons, the king possesses his negative, and the exercise of that negative would be less culpable than making peers to screen himself.

“ But the strongest argument against the bill is, that it will not only be a discouragement to virtue and merit, but would endanger our excellent constitution; for as there is a due balance between the three branches of the legislature, it will destroy that balance, and consequently subvert the whole constitution, by causing one of the three powers, which are now dependent on each other, to preponderate in the scale. The crown is dependent upon the commons by the power of granting money; the commons are dependent on the crown by the power of dissolution: The lords will now be made independent of both.

“ The sixteen elective Scotch peers, already admit themselves to be a dead court weight, yet the same sixteen are now to be made hereditary, and nine added to their number. These twenty-five, under the influence of corrupt ministers, may find their account in betraying their trust; the majority of the lords may also find their account in supporting such ministers; but the commons, and the commons only, must suffer for all, and be deprived of every advantage. If the proposed measure destroys two negatives in the crown, it gives a negative to these twenty-five united, and confers a power, superior to that of the king himself, on the head of a clan, who will have the power of recommending many. The Scotch commoners can have no other view in supporting this measure, but the expected aggrandizement of their own chiefs. It will dissolve the allegiance of the Scotch peers who are not

Period II.
1714 to 1720.

amongst the twenty-five, and who can never hope for the benefit of an
tion to be peers of parliament, and almost enact obedience from the sove
to the betrayers of the constitution.

“ The present view of the bill is dangerous; the view to posterity, pe
and unpardonable; it will make the lords masters of the king, accordi
their own confession, when they admit, that a change of administration
ders a new creation of peers necessary; for by precluding the king
making peers in future, it at the same time precludes him from changin
present administration, who will naturally fill the vacancies with their
creatures; and the new peers will adhere to the first minister, with the
zeal and unanimity as those created by Oxford adhered to him.

“ If when the parliament was made septennial, the power of dissolv
before the end of seven years had been wrested from the crown, woul
such an alteration have added immense authority to the commons? and
the prerogative of the crown in dissolving parliaments, may be, and has
oftener abused, than the power of creating peers.

“ But it may be observed, that the king, for his own sake, will rarely
a great number of peers, for they, being usually created by the influen
the first minister, soon become, upon a change of administration, a w
against the crown; and had queen Anne lived, the truth of this observ
would have been verified in the case of most of the twelve peers made
Oxford. Let me ask, however, is the abuse of any prerogative a suffi
reason for totally annihilating that prerogative? Under that consider
the power of dissolving parliaments ought to be taken away, because
power has been more exercised, and more abused than any of the other p
gatives; yet in 1641, when the king had assented to a law that disabled
from proroguing or dissolving parliament, without the consent of
houses, he was from that time under subjection to the parliament, and
thence followed all the subsequent mischiefs, and his own destruction
may also be asked, Whether the prerogative of making peace and war
never been abused? I might here call to your recollection the pea
Utrecht, and the present war with Spain. Yet who will presume to
that the power of making war and peace, should be taken from the cro

“ How can the lords expect the commons to give their concurrence
bill by which they and their posterity are to be for ever excluded fro
peerage? How would they themselves receive a bill which should pre
baron from being made a viscount, a viscount an earl, an earl a marqu
a marquis a duke? Would they consent to limit the number of any ra
peerage? Certainly none; unless, perhaps, the dukes. If the preten

this measure is, that it will tend to secure the freedom of parliament, I say that there are many other steps more important and less equivocal, such as the discontinuance of bribes and pensions. Chapter 18.
1718 to 1719.

“That this bill will secure the liberty of parliament, I totally deny; it will secure a great preponderance to the peers; it will form them into a compact impenetrable phalanx, by giving them the power to exclude, in all cases of extinction and creation, all such persons from their body, who may be obnoxious to them. In the instances we have seen of their judgment in some late cases, sufficient marks of partiality may be found to put us on our guard against committing to them the power they would derive from this bill, of judging the right of latent or dormant titles, when their verdict would be of such immense importance. If gentlemen will not be convinced by argument, at least, let them not shut their ears to the dreadful example of former times; let them recollect that the overweening disposition of the great barons, to aggrandize their own dignity, occasioned them to exclude the lesser barons, and to that circumstance may be fairly attributed the sanguinary wars which so long desolated the country*.”

The effect of this speech on the house, exceeded the most sanguine expectation; it fixed those who had before been wavering and irresolute, brought over many who had been tempted by the speciousness of the measure to favour its introduction, and procured its rejection by a triumphant majority of 269 against 177.

Bill rejected.

* The substance of this speech is collected from memorandums in Sir Robert Walpole's own hand-writing, among lord Orford's pa-

pers.—See also, Onslow on Opposition, Correspondence, Period II.—Historical Register, 1719.—Chandler.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

PERIOD THE THIRD:

From the South Sea Act, to the Death of GEORGE the First

1720—1727.

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH:

1720.

Origin and Progress of the South Sea Company.—Their Project for liquidating the National Debt.—Espoused by the Ministry.—Opposed by Walpole.—Accepted by Parliament.—Walpole reconciles the King and the Prince of Wales.—Forms a Coalition with Sunderland.—Townshend appointed President of the Council.—Walpole Paymaster of the Forces.—Retires into the Country.

Origin of the
South Sea
Company.

THE commencement of this period forms a memorable æra in the political life of Sir Robert Walpole, and holds him forth as the restorer of the national credit, which the fatal effects of the South Sea scheme brought to the brink of destruction.

The South Sea Company owed its origin to a chimerical project, formed by Harley in 1711, for the purpose of restoring the public credit, which had been greatly affected by the dismissal of the Whig ministry, and of establishing a fund for the discharge of the navy and army debentures, and the redemption of parts of the floating debt, which amounted to £. 9,471,325; and was afterwards increased to £. 10,000,000. With a view to settle a fund for paying the interest of 6 per cent. on these arrears, which amounted to the annual sum of £. 568,279, all the duties upon wines, vinegar, tobacco, India goods, wrought silks, whale fins, and a few other duties, were rendered permanent. In order to allure the creditors with the hopes of advantages from a new commerce, the monopoly of a trade to the South Sea, or coast of Spain and America, was granted to a company composed of the several proprietors of this funded debt, which being incorporated by act of parliament, took the name of the South Sea Company.

pellam

pellation of the South Sea Company *. The great advantages to be derived from this commerce, had been held forth and exaggerated from the time of our first voyages to Spanish America, in the reign of Elizabeth, and had been still farther increased by the reports of the buccaneers. The considerable riches which France had brought from America, since the establishment of Philip the Fifth on the throne of Spain, had contributed to raise the sanguine expectations of the British merchants; a rumour, industriously circulated, that four ports on the coasts of Peru and Chili, were to be ceded by Spain, inflamed the general ardour; the prospect of exchanging gold, silver, and rich drugs for the manufactures of England, were plausible allurements for an enterprising and commercial nation; and the mines of Potosi and Mexico, were to diffuse their inexhaustible stores through the medium of the new company.

The famous act of parliament, which incorporated the subscribers of the debts, under the name of the governor and company of merchants of Great Britain trading to the South Seas and other parts of America, was called the earl of Oxford's master piece, and considered by his panegyrists as the sure means of bringing an inexhaustible mine of riches into England. But in fact this scheme was settled on a false foundation; for by the peace of Utrecht, Spain and the Indies being confirmed to Philip the Fifth, that monarch was too jealous to admit the English to a free trade in the South Sea, and instead of the advantageous commerce which Oxford had held forth, the company obtained only the † assiento contract, or the privilege of supplying the Spanish colonies of America with negroes for 30 years, with the permission of sending to Spanish America an annual ship, limited both as to tonnage and value of cargo, of the profits of which the king of Spain reserved one fourth, and five per cent. on the other three fourths ‡. But this disappointment was attempted to be counteracted by the declaration made by Oxford, that Spain had permitted two ships, in addition to the annual ship, to carry merchandise, during the first year to the northern coasts of Spanish America, and a pompous nomination of the several ports where the company had leave to trade, and settle factories. But the grand benefits of this commerce were never realised. The first voyage of the annual ship was not made till 1717, and in the following year, the trade was suppressed by the rupture with Spain. Their effects, factories, and servants were seized and detained, notwithstanding

Progress and
suspension of
their trade.

1713

* James Postlethwayt's Historical State of the South Sea Company.—Anderson on Commerce, vol. 3. p. 43. Tindal, vol. 17. p. 361.

† Assiento is a Spanish word, signifying a firm or contract.

‡ Anderson, vol. 3. page 55.

ing.

Period III. ing the agreement in the assiento, which allowed, in case of a rupture, eighteen months for the removal of their effects.

1720 to 1727. Such was the state of the South Sea Company, when the ministry, instead of attempting to lessen the national incumbrances, by the only just and successful means, a clear and inviolable sinking fund, adopted the visionary schemes of projectors, and gave to the South Sea Company the power of fascinating the minds of the public, and spreading an infatuation similar to that which had recently involved France in a national bankruptcy. The grand point which government had in view, was the reduction of the irredeemable annuities, created in the reigns of William and Anne, for a period of 89, 96, and 99 years, amounting nearly to £. 800,000 per annum, as no effectual measures could be adopted to lessen the public debts, whilst these annuities remained irredeemable.

Proposal laid before parliament.

Feb. 22d.

Objected to.

In order to effect this liquidation, the minister accepted proposals from the South Sea Company, for reducing the debts to a redeemable state: as the object of the ministers, who had previously and secretly arranged the scheme with the directors, was to surprise the house of commons into the measure of granting this extensive privilege to the South Sea Company, and of preventing competition, they entertained the most sanguine hopes of success, from the specious advantages which they held forth to the public as the necessary consequences. They accordingly laid the business before a committee of the house of commons *. Aislabe having opened the proposal of the South Sea Company, and declared that, if it was accepted, the national debt could be liquidated in twenty-six years, was followed by secretary Craggs, who after congratulating the chancellor of the exchequer, on the clear and intelligible manner in which he had explained the business, and the nation on the prospect of discharging the debt sooner than was generally expected, concluded by observing, that no other regular motion could be made, than that the chairman should report progress, and desire leave to sit again, as he took it for granted, that every gentleman was ready and willing to receive the proposal according to the scheme which had been so well explained. On sitting down a profound silence ensued, and continued for almost a quarter of an hour, until the secretary again rose, and made the motion in form. Thomas Brodrick †, member for Stockbridge, then rose, and after observing, that until the national debt was discharged, we could not properly speaking, call ourselves a

* Journals.

† Brother of lord Middleton, lord chancellor of Ireland.

nation, and that therefore every propofal, tending to that great end, ought to be received and confidered: He added, that the firft gentleman who fpoke, appeared to recommend this fcheme exclufively, and the fecretary had agreed with him; but it was to be hoped, that with a view of obtaining the beft bargain for the nation, every other company, or any fociety of men, might be alfo at full liberty to deliver in their propofals. This obfervation difconcerted and confounded the minifters. They felt themfelves embarrassed, and being unable to give any reasonable arguments in favour of fuch a conduct, they had recourfe to violent assertions and perfonal reflections. Aiflabie, in particular, having ufed fome unguarded expreffions, "*that things of this nature muft be carried on with fpirit*," was interrupted by Sir Jofeph Jekyl, who obferved, with much warmth, "It is this fpirit which has undone the nation; our bufinefs is to confider thoroughly, deliberate calmly, and judge of the whole upon reafon, not with the fpirit alluded to." Aiflabie, in attempting to explain, betrayed fo much embarrassment, that he excited the laughter of the houfe. Walpole then rofe, and put a momentary flop to thefe indecorous altercations. He applauded the defign, agreed in general to the propriety of the fcheme, but declared that fome parts required amendment, and a few others were unreafonable, concluding ftrongly in favour of receiving all propofals, which feemed to be almoft the general opinion. Lechmere replied, but inftead of confining himfelf to the fubject in debate, he poured forth invectives againft the fcheme which had been propofed by Walpole, for the payment of the national debt, and gave the preference to that before the houfe. Walpole, irritated by this virulent attack, rofe again, and with no lefs afperity, but with more calmnefs and fkill, retorted on Lechmere: he proved, from papers * which he held in his hand, that the member who fpoke laft had unfairly reprefented facts, expofed his deceitful mode of reafoning, entered minutely into the fcheme, and laid open its fallacy in many material points: Lechmere, ftill farther provoked, again attempted to reply, but met with repeated interruptions. In vain the chairman called to order, and ex-

Walpole favours an open competition.

* Among the Orford Papers, are feveral notes and memorandums in Sir Robert Walpole's hand writing, which contain comparative accounts of the two propofals, and give the preference to that of the bank. Thefe are probably fome of the papers from which he

made his ftatements to the houfe, but as they were written merely for his own private ufe, and confift principally of figures, with few fpecific references, little ufe could be made of them. The magnitude of the South Sea project, will appear from one of thefe notes.

South Sea, prefent capital	—	—	—	11,746,844	8	10
Purchase of the redeemable debts	—	—	—	15,924,218	12	10 $\frac{1}{2}$
Irredeemables	—	—	—	15,057,493	13	8

And including the original capital, the whole ftock is — 6,42,728,556 15 4 $\frac{1}{2}$

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

Proposal of
the bank.

Feb. 1st.

Walpole
speaks against
the South Sea
scheme.

claimed, "Hear your member." The whole house repeatedly cried, "We have heard him long enough." The chairman quitted the chair, the speaker having resumed it, the house unanimously agreed to receive the proposals, and to resolve itself into a committee the following Wednesday to consider farther of the subject *.

In consequence of these resolutions, the bank of England laid a proposition before the commons, offering still more advantageous terms, as it was supposed, that considerable benefits would accrue to those who the scheme was accepted, a strong competition prevailed between the bank and South Sea company, who endeavoured to outbid each other. The South Sea company had offered to give £.3,500,000; but the bank having bid £.5,500,000, the company were so irritated, that at a court, the directors were instructed to obtain the preference, *cost what would* †, and they succeeded, by the offer of paying the enormous sum of £.7,567,500, as a gratuity to the public. This proposal being laid before the house of commons, was warmly opposed by Walpole, who spoke in favour of the bank. In vain he displayed the fallacy of the South Sea scheme, the great difference between that and the bank, by shewing, that the company was not limited in the price they were to put on the stock made good to them; whereas the bank offered a specific sum of £.1,700 ft. for every hundred pounds in the long annuities, and the same proportion for short annuities. In vain he urged, that it countenanced the pernicious practice of stock jobbing, by diverting the genius of the nation from trade and industry; that it held out a dangerous lure for decoying the unwary to ruin by a false prospect of gain, and to part with the gradual profits of labour, for imaginary wealth. In vain he insisted, that if the proposal of the South Sea company should be accepted, the rise of their stock ought to be limited. In vain he dwelt on the miseries and confusion which prevailed in France, from the adoption of similar measures. In vain he said that as the whole success of the scheme must chiefly depend on the rise of the stock, the great principle of the project was an evil of the first magnitude; it was to raise artificially the value of the stock, by exciting and keeping up a general infatuation, and by promising dividends out of funds which would not be adequate to the purpose. In vain he predicted, that if the establishment succeeded, the directors would become masters of the government, form an absolute aristocracy in the kingdom, and controul the resolutions of the legislature; or if it did not succeed, the failure would

* No account of this extraordinary debate is to be found in any publication:—The substance is taken from a letter of Thomas Bro-

derick to lord chancellor Mordaunt, January 24th. See Correspondence, Perpetual. † True State of the South Sea Scheme.

a general discontent. He closed his speech by observing, that such would be the delusive consequences, that the public would conceive it a dream *. His arguments and his eloquence were of no avail. He was compared by his friends to Cassandra, predicting evils which would only be believed when the event proved their reality, and only deprecated when they were felt; and he whose speeches, in matters of finance, occupied the house with more than usual attention, was now scarcely heard. The preference was given to the South Sea, and the bill was afterwards carried by a majority of more than 3 to 1 †. Thus passed this fatal act, compared by earl Cowper to the Trojan horse, which was ushered in and received with great pomp and acclamations of joy, but was contrived for treachery and destruction. Walpole not only spoke with energy against the project, but gave to the public a pamphlet on the subject, called, "The South Sea Scheme considered ‡."

At this period, Sunderland felt himself involved in great difficulties; he had promised the Hanoverians to procure for them a repeal of the restraining clause in the act of settlement, but the success which marked the efforts of his adversaries, proved the impracticability of such an attempt. The impatience of the foreign favourites to obtain the full possession of the expected honors and emoluments, rendered them dissatisfied with the minister, who while he professed an inclination, avowed his want of power to gratify them. Thus exposed to the hostile attacks of one party, and ill supported by the other, he found himself under the necessity of gaining friends to strengthen his administration. The opposition which Walpole had given to the measures of government, and his great influence in the house of commons, where he was feebly resisted by Craggs, Aislaby and Lechmere, pointed him out as the most desirable co-adjutor in the present state of circumstances; overtures were made to him and Townshend, and a partial coalition took place.

On the 6th of May, Walpole seconded a motion, made by Pelham, for an address of thanks to the king; on the 4th of June he was appointed paymaster general of the forces, and on the 11th, Townshend was nominated president of the council. Previously, however, to this arrangement, Walpole had, in conjunction with the duke of Devonshire, been the principal means of effecting a reconciliation between the king and the prince of Wales, whose misunderstanding had arisen to so alarming a height, as to threaten a

Chapter 19.
1720.

April 2.

Townshend
and Walpole
join Sunder-
land.

Walpole pay-
master of the
forces.

Reconciles
the king and
prince.

* Political State of Europe, vol. 20. Anderson.—Memorandums and Letters in the Walpole and Orford Papers.

† Journals.—Political State, vol. 19, p. 430.

‡ Royal and Noble Authors—Article, Earl of Orford. History of the South Sea Company.—Anderson, vol. 3.—Steuart's Political Eco-

nomy, vol. 2. p. 387.—Sir Robert Walpole's Pamphlet, called South Sea Scheme considered.—Sir John Blunt's Pamphlet; The true State of the South Sea Scheme.—Political State of Great Britain, vol. 19, 20, 21.—Tindal, vol. 19.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

disturbance of the public tranquillity. The causes of this misunderstanding have been already related, and it was still farther increased and brought to notice, by an incident which happened at the christening of one of the princes. The king was to stand godfather, and the prince had desired for his uncle, the duke of York, for the other; but, when the ceremony was formed, the duke of Newcastle, lord chamberlain of the household, stood in the place of father, by the king's command, not as proxy for the duke of York, but in his own name. This circumstance irritated the prince, who, at the conclusion of the ceremony, violently reproached the duke, almost in the king's presence, for having solicited the honour in his despite. The king, in answer to this indiscreet want of respect, signified his displeasure, by commanding the duke to remain in his apartment, under arrest, and soon afterwards ordered him to quit the palace. Notice was also formally given, that no persons who had rendered their respects to the prince and princess of Wales, would be received at court, and they were deprived of their usual guard, and of all other marks of distinction*.

The resentment of the king was also carried to such an extremity, that with a view to embarrass his son, he formed a resolution of obtaining an act of parliament for compelling him to resign, on his accession to the throne, all the German dominions. With this view, the opinion of the lord chancellor, afterwards earl of Macclesfield, was demanded, and a conference held to consider of the legality and expediency of the scheme. The answer given by the chancellor, fully put a stop to the measure, as inexpedient and impracticable, and liable to be followed by very dangerous consequences†.

The honour of effecting the reconciliation in the royal family was peculiarly due to Walpole. In a conference which he held with Sunderland to arrange the plan of a joint administration, the minister, who was averse to the union of the two courts, endeavoured to detach him from the prince. Walpole offered him any conditions for himself and friends, provided he would consent that the prince should remain in disgrace‡. But Walpole rejected all his overtures, and insisted on the reconciliation, as an indispensable preliminary, before he would listen to any terms of coalition. Having extorted this concession, he, with the assistance of the duke of Devonshire§, disposed of the prince of Wales to write a submissive letter, in which permission was re-

* Tindal, vol. 19, p. 169.

† The original draught of this curious conference, in the hand writing of the lord chancellor, is in the possession of Thomas Atle, esquire.

‡ Etough.—Communicated by Sir John Walpole.

§ Tindal, vol. 19, p. 344. Groves, of the Dukes of Devonshire, vol. 2, p.

ed to wait upon the king. He was accordingly admitted to a private conference, and on his return from the palace to Leicester house, where he had taken up his residence, was attended by a party of guards, and from that time the father and son appeared to be reconciled.

Although Walpole accepted the place of paymaster of the forces, yet he did not cordially coalesce with the administration; and on the prorogation of parliament, he took no active share in the government. He passed the remaining part of the summer at Houghton, and was called to take a leading part, when the voice of the king, of the parliament, and of the nation unanimously singled him out as the person best qualified to heal the wounds, which the frenzy and frauds of the South Sea company had inflicted on the public credit.

Chapter 19.
1720.

Retires to
Houghton.
1720.
July 28.

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH:

1720—1721.

Departure of the King for Hanover.—Rise and Fall of the South Sea Stock.—National Infatuation and Despair.—Walpole's Endeavours to restore the Credit of the Company.—The King returns from Hanover.—Alarming State of Affairs.—Embarrassment of the Ministry.—Despondency of the King.—Walpole's Plan for the Restoration of Public Credit.—Discussed.

SOON after the appointment of Townshend and Walpole, the king departed for Hanover; having previously named a council of regency, composed of several high officers of state, contrary to the general expectation, which in consequence of the supposed union between the king and prince of Wales, looked to him as regent in the absence of his father.

At this crisis the general frenzy in favour of the South Sea speculation had risen to an enormous height. The compensation to the South Sea company, for the immediate payment of the £.7,567,500, seemingly for no value received, was to be drawn from the profits of their scheme. These profits were to arise from, 1. The exclusive advantages of the trade, which although precarious, and depending on a peace with Spain, were stated at no less than £.200,000

June 14.
The king
goes to Han-
over.

South Sea
infatuation.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

£. 200,000 a year. 2. The allowance for the charge of management, was to be proportioned to the augmentation of their stock. 3. The diff of receiving 5 per cent. for the money expended in purchasing the p debts, when the usual interest was only 4 per cent. 4. The great ad to their wealth, from the constant rise in the price of the stock, in c quence of the artifices used to enhance its value ; on which the whole f of the scheme depended *.

Artifices of
the company.

The company could not fulfil its engagements with government, and so large a sum as between seven and eight millions, without taking a tage of the general infatuation, and availing themselves of that spirit of niary enterprise, which had seized the public mind. Imaginary a tages were accordingly held forth ; groundless and mysterious † report circulated concerning valuable acquisitions in the South Sea, and hidden fures ; dividends of ten, thirty, and even fifty per cent. were voted, the directors knew could never be paid, and for which there was no fo tion.

Exaggerated
advantages.

The promoters of the scheme highly exaggerated the profits ; rumour at the same time spread, that the company, by monopolizing the of the whole national debt, would reduce government to the necessity plying to them for loans, which would be advanced on their own terms it was even insinuated, that the proprietors would obtain, by the weigh their wealth, a majority in the house of commons, and make and depose fters. The public being intoxicated with these ideas, the stock, which close of the books at Christmas, 1719, was only at 126, rose, at the op of the first subscription, on the 14th of April, to above £. 300, the m price being on that day 325 : in other words, the creditors of the m made over a debt of 100 for 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ in South Sea stock. As the frenzy f and the desire of making rapid fortunes became contagious, the stoc cessively rose to above 1,000 per cent. at which price the books were c for the fourth subscription the 24th of August ; and this subscription, t the market-price of the established stock was below 800, was sold the day for a premium of 30 and 40 per cent.

Rise and fall
of the stocks.

* Steuarts Political OEconomy, vol. 2. p. 386, 387. Anderson's History of Commerce vol. 3. p. 96.

† To these mysterious hints and fancied treasures, a ballad on the South Sea alluded ;

What need have we of Indian wealth ;
Or commerce with our neighbours ?

Our constitution is in health,
And riches crown our labours.
Our South Sea ships have golden throats
They bring us wealth, 'tis gran
But lodge their treasure in the clouds,
To hide it till it's wanted.

Political State, vol. 20. p. 178.

The sanguine cupidity, which marked this speculation, was not confined to the South Sea scheme: the whole nation became stock-jobbers and projectors: every day produced new propofals*, some of apparent importance and utility, others so absurd and futile, that their success was matter of surprise, and almost exceeds credibility. So prevalent was this rage, amongst persons even of the highest rank, that the prince of Wales was induced to become governor of the copper company. In vain Walpole and Compton endeavoured to dissuade him from this act of degradation, by representing, that he subjected himself to a prosecution, that he would be reviled in parliament, and that the *prince of Wales's bubble* would be hawked about in Change alley. Their remonstrances had no effect, the prince became governor, but afterwards, on receiving notice that a prosecution would be commenced against the company, withdrew his name, with a gain of £. 40,000 †.

These delusive projects received their first check from the power to which they owed their birth: The directors of the South Sea company, jealous of their success, and desirous to monopolize all the money of the speculators, obtained writs of *scire facias* against the conductors of bubbles, and thus put an end to them. But in opening the eyes of the deluded multitude, they took away the main prop of their own tottering edifice. Suspicion once excited was not to be suppressed, and the public, no longer amused by pompous declarations, and promises of dividends, which they were convinced could never be realized, declined all farther purchases of stock, which fell in less than three weeks to 400, and those who had bought at large premiums were involved in distress and ruin. Amongst the numbers who suffered by these speculations, were not only persons of the first rank, but merchants and traders of every class, and bankers, who having advanced the monies committed to them, on the subscription receipts, by their temporary stoppages augmented the general calamity.

When the public distress was arrived to a most alarming height, and despair pervaded all ranks of people, to Walpole every eye was directed, as the only person capable of affording assistance, under the pressure of immediate

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Other projects or bubbles.

Walpole's endeavours to retrieve the credit of the company.

* The reader will find near two hundred of these bubbles, enumerated in Anderson's History of Commerce, vol. 3. p. 103. Amongst the most absurd may be mentioned, projects, For transmuting quicksilver into a malleable and fine metal.—For importing a number of large jack-asses from Spain, in order to propagate a large breed of mules; —and for trading in human hair. But the most impudent and bare-

faced delusion, was that of a man who advertised, that upon payment of two guineas, the subscribers should be intitled to a hundred pound share, in a project which would be disclosed in a month; the extreme folly of the public was such, that he received a thousand of these subscriptions in one day, and then went off.

† Secretary Craggs to Earl Stanhope, Jul. 12th. Correspondence; Period III.

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necessity. When the aid of the bank became necessary to preserve the South Sea company from ruin, he was called from the country, and importunately used his interest with the governors, to persuade them to accept a proposal made by the South Sea company, to circulate a number of their bonds. At this awful moment the clamour of distress was irresistible, and the king, after great reluctance, arising from a natural dread of being involved in the same ruin which threatened the South Sea company, was at last induced to listen to the proposals. Walpole was present at several conferences between the committees of the two companies, and drew up the first conference, a minute, well known afterwards by the name of the bank contract, specifying the agreement of the bank, to circulate millions of South Sea bonds for one year, on certain conditions, which were specified at a subsequent meeting. The report of his * interference, and the intended aid to be given by the bank, occasioned a temporary rise in the South Sea stock, but the public was in such a state of terror and agitation, and so desperate was the situation of the South Sea company, that any compromise of interests between the two companies, was considered as fatal to both. In consequence of this notion, such a demand was made on the bank, that the governors refused to abide by the terms of their agreement; alleging that it was deficient in legal validity †.

Arrival of
the king.

The critical state of the nation having rendered the immediate presence of the king necessary, he hastily quitted his German dominions, and landed at Margate, on the 9th of November. But his presence had not the desired effect. South Sea stock, which at the king's arrival was at 210, fell in a few days to 135 ‡. The public now looked with anxious expectation for the assembling of parliament, which was to meet on the 25th of November; yet such were the difficulties under which the ministry laboured, to find a proper scheme for remedying the national distress, which daily increased, that it was farther prorogued to the 8th of December.

National de-
spondency.

Nor is it a matter of wonder that the ministry were alarmed, and uncertain what measures to pursue. England had never experienced so total a destruction of credit, never was any country in so violent a paroxysm of debauchery and terror. The South Sea company was considered as the sole cause of all the national misfortunes, the directors were indiscriminately loaded with execrations, and devoted by the public voice to condign punishment. Those who had promoted the scheme were involved in the same general detest

* Political State.

† True State of the South Sea Scheme.—

Some Considerations concerning the South Sea Funds, p. 88, 91.—Tindal.

‡ Political State.—Tindal.

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The king, in addition to the odium of being a foreigner, and governed by foreign counsels, and of increasing his own dominions in Germany, at the expence of England, was now most virulently reviled for having favoured the South Sea act. Well-founded suspicions were formed, that his German ministers and mistresses had received enormous largesses in stock to recommend and promote the project. Most of the principal ministers of the English cabinet, Townshend excepted, were accused of being implicated in the same scandalous traffic, either by themselves or their relations, and had totally forfeited the public opinion.

Idle reports were circulated, and believed, that Sunderland * was endeavouring to prevail on the king to marry the duchess of Kendal, with a view to diminish the influence of the prince of Wales; and that he was following the example of his father with James the second, in driving his master to such acts of unpopularity, as might cause a deposition, and establish a republic on the ruins of the throne. A general outcry prevailed, that the king and ministers had leagued with the South Sea company to dupe the nation, and that the remedy for these enormous evils, would be more dangerous than the disorder itself.

Popular clamours.

The public discontents were increased to so great a height, that some of his Hanoverian counsellors suggested the rashest measures †. They advised the king to affect a resignation of the crown to the prince of Wales, and insinuated, that William, his great predecessor, had surmounted the factions of the time by threatening to retire, and leave the country to its fate. As a last and desperate effort, he was recommended to apply to the army to sound the officers, many of whom it was said, had declared, that rather than submit to the establishment of a commonwealth, or a popish competitor, they would assist to render the king absolute. Others were alarmed, and dreaded a misunderstanding between the king and the parliament; deprecated any attempt to apply to the army, opposed the resignation of the crown, by insinuating, that it was not the first time, that a king of England had ruined himself by retiring, with the hope of quelling the fury of the populace; advised rather, that secret applications should be made to the Emperor and the other allies, for troops, if necessary, to defend his person against any rebellious attempts.

In this alarming crisis, the king was pensive and desponding, uncertain how to act, and by whom to be directed.

The king despondent.

* Letters from Count Bernsdorf, and other Hanoverian ministers, among the Townshend Papers.

† Ibid.

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Applies to
Walpole.

Fortunately, in this moment of suspense and agitation, the public called forth Walpole, as the only man calculated to save the nation from impending destruction. In conjunction with Townshend, he stood at the head of a large party, highly respected for their *tried* integrity; among whose names of Cavendish and Russell were most conspicuous, who had united with him; while the dukes of Newcastle, Bolton, Grafton, and other Whigs, who had united with Sunderland, were now ready to follow his standard. He was attached to government by the office of paymaster of the forces; but as he had scarcely taken any part in public transactions, he did not share with administration the general odium. He had acquired popularity by his uniform opposition to the South Sea act, and by having predicted the evils which were now most *severely* felt.

Walpole now possessed the power, had he possessed the inclination to ruin the South Sea company, the directors of which had treated him with many marks of contempt and obloquy, and to wreak his vengeance on its principal contriver, Sunderland, who by his cabals in 1716, had displaced him and Townshend from the helm of government*. He was not ignorant that the Hanoverian junto were dissatisfied with Sunderland. The promises which he had made of obtaining the repeal of the incapacity clause, were not fulfilled, and when he was reproached for the breach of his word, he had excused himself by alledging, that Walpole, on whom he had relied for carrying the measure through the house of commons, was not in administration. Walpole, therefore, was secure of their co-operation; he had deigned to make overtures to them. He also well knew, that Sunderland had principally promoted the South Sea act, for the purpose of curing, by largesses of stock, a majority in both houses of parliament. He was aware that the minister had never cordially coalesced with Townshend, and that as soon as he had strengthened his party by these means, he had formed a resolution to obtain their dismissal.

The affairs of the South Sea company were in so desperate a situation, that popular outcry against the directors so violent, and the general distress so urgent, that he did not want excuses for justifying a refusal to undertake arduous business.

But Walpole was not of a vindictive temper; he cheerfully sacrificed his own resentment, and though fully satisfied of Sunderland's insidious and overbearing character, came forward to assist in relieving his country.

* Letter from Wm. Pulteney, Correspondence, Period III.

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the general calamity. He was fully aware of the numerous embarrassments which opposed his success. To him was enjoined the difficult task of preserving the honour of the king, which seemed contaminated by the notorious avarice and venality of his German followers; of counteracting the unpopularity of the minister, by whose authority and influence the South Sea bill had been framed and carried; of satisfying the sufferers, who loudly appealed for indemnification, without detriment to the public; of drawing the difficult line between too much lenity and too much severity; of reconciling the people to the king, and of calming the discontents, which threatened tumults and insurrections. He did not, however, shrink from the trial; but engaged in the task with that ardour and assiduity which marked his character. After examining various proposals which were submitted to his consideration, he adopted a plan for ingrafting a certain portion of the South Sea stock in the bank and East India company; the first hint of which was suggested by Jacombe *, under secretary at war. Having amended the scheme in several instances, and prepared it for public deliberation, he referred it to the king, in a letter †, in which, after expressing his strong sense of the difficulties which he had to encounter, he declared, that he engaged in the undertaking solely in obedience to his majesty's command. The king and cabinet having ratified the scheme, and the monied part of the nation having sanctioned it with their approbation, he came prepared to submit it to parliament.

Walpole forms a plan for the restoration of public credit.

The moment in which it was publicly known that Walpole, in conjunction with Townshend, was employed on a scheme for the restoration of public credit, a new spirit and resolution seemed to be infused into the nation. The country revived from its late despondency; and his ability for finance was so thoroughly appreciated, that a proposal which he made to the minister on the 19th of November, being agreed to, had such an instantaneous effect, as again to raise the stock from 125 to 200 ‡.

Restores public confidence.

On the meeting of parliament, Walpole had many difficulties to surmount, before he could venture to lay his plan before the house. One of the greatest arose from the zeal of those who were more remarkable for their integrity than their judgment, and whose indignation excited them to adopt such violent resolutions, as without producing any essential benefit to the sufferers, would have occasioned a total destruction of public credit..

* Jacombe's letter to Robert Walpole, October 11. Correspondence, Period III. and Walpole's speech, at the end of this chapter.

† Correspondence, Period III.

‡ Letter from William Pulteney to Daniel Pulteney, Correspondence, Period III.—Political State, 1720.

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 Proceedings
 in parlia-
 ment.
 December 3.

This vindictive spirit displayed itself in the first debate which took place on the king's speech. Pulteney having moved for an address, assuring his majesty that the commons would at this critical juncture proceed with the utmost possible care, prudence, and temper, to inquire into the causes of the late misfortunes, and apply the proper remedies for restoring and fixing public credit upon such solid foundations, as might effectually give ease and satisfaction to the minds of his majesty's subjects: Shippen proposed an addition, in the following words "for restoring public credit," "as far as it is consistent with the honour of parliament, the interests of the nation, and the principles of justice." This amendment was warmly seconded; and occasioned a long and warm debate, in the course of which the directors were stigmatised with every probrious appellation which language could suggest. Several of the members urged the most bitter invectives against the act for vesting too large a power in a set of men, whom they called miscreants, the scum of the people. Joseph Jekyll hoped that all the directors were not equally culpable, but that he was, that some who were not directors were highly criminal; and that a British parliament would not want a vindictive power to punish national crimes. Lord Moleworth owned, that there were no laws in England to punish the South Sea directors, but contended that the example of the Romans ought to be followed, who, because their laws were defective, having provided a penalty for parricide, made one to punish the crime which had been committed, and adjudged the guilty wretch to be sewed up in a sack and thrown alive into the Tyber. He concluded, "that as he looked upon the contrivers and executors of the South Sea scheme, as the parricides of their country, he should be satisfied to see them undergo the same fate."

In the height of this altercation, Walpole remarked, that it was prudent to begin the sessions with irritating inquiries before they examined the cause; that if the city of London was on fire, all wise men would rush to extinguish the flames, and prevent the spreading of the conflagration. They inquired who were the incendiaries. In like manner, public credit, which had received a most dangerous wound, and being still in a bleeding condition, they ought to apply a speedy remedy; and afterwards they ought to inquire into the cause of the calamity. "For my part," he continued, "I never approved the South Sea scheme, and am sensible it has done a great deal of mischief: but since it cannot be undone, it is the duty of good men, to assist in retrieving it: With this view, I have already had some thoughts on a proposal to restore public credit, which, in a

time, I will submit to the wisdom of parliament*." This mild exhortation calmed the house, and the amendment was negatived by a majority of 261 against 103 †. But although he carried his point at this time, yet on the next day, the temper of the house appearing more inclined to severity, he did not attempt to oppose the prevailing spirit; and an addition to the address, "for punishing the authors of our present calamities," being moved, was carried without a division.

In these debates, it appeared, for the first time, that party had no concern; Whigs and Tories could not be distinguished by their votes. These partialities were suspended, and almost annihilated by various other passions, which produced numberless intrigues. Many of the commons were sincerely touched with the public calamities, or moved by their own private losses: others, dissatisfied with the ministry and court, were pleased to have an opportunity of covering their revenge, with the specious pretence of justice and the public good: some had in view, by their loud and bitter complaints, to increase their own importance, or draw the attention of the opposite party; others, engaged in the secret practices of the South Sea, hoped, by an affected severity, to prevent suspicion. A few there were, who concealed, under the appearance of zeal and indignation, their devotion to some of the principal managers ‡. The party hostile to the established government took advantage of the public indignation, and excited the most violent clamours against those who, like Walpole, opposed extreme severity, and laboured to mitigate the spirit of revenge. Their views were directed to increase confusion and inflame discontent, with the hopes of procuring a majority of the disaffected in the new parliament, and by means of popular insurrections, to hasten the restoration of the Pretender, which they now looked up to as a certain event. Such were the views and temper of parties in the house of commons, which Walpole had to encounter, and such was the spirit of discontent which he had to allay, before he could carry any scheme into execution; and yet it was in the midst of these discordant sentiments, and petulant opposition, that by means of consummate prudence and management, he gradually brought the house to reason and discretion.

A committee was appointed, on the 9th of December, to take into consideration the state of public credit on the 15th, but on the 12th it was moved, that the directors should forthwith lay before the house, an account of all their proceedings; this motion being warmly seconded and supported, was

* Political State, vol. 20. p. 561.

† Journals.

‡ Tindal, vol. 19, p. 379.

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opposed by Craggs, Lord Hinchinbroke, and the two Walpoles. The previous question being called for against this delay, Sir Richard Steele argued that this nation, which two years ago possessed more weight and credit than any other nation in Europe, was reduced to its present state by a few cyphering cits, a species of men of equal capacity, in all respects (that of cheating a deluded people only excepted) with those animals who saved the capitol, who were now to be screened by those of greater force for what reason they best knew, others were at liberty to judge. In answer to an argument against the question, that this vindictive justice so much contended for, would not be effectual, because it would be impractical to procure a true account of the delinquents' estates, another urged, that the laws against bankrupts enacted into one against the directors (for so they should call them, as a word that conveyed more obloquy than any other expression) would in his opinion, attain the end proposed *. Horace Walpole, in speaking for the previous question, confessed that the South Sea scheme was weak in its projection, villanous in its execution, and calamitous in its end; but that, in his opinion, they ought to begin with applying a remedy to the evil. Walpole himself did not attempt to make any defence of the directors; but said, "that as he had already declared, he had spent some time upon a proposal for that purpose; he was, however, apprehensive, that if they went on in a warm, passionate way, the scheme might be rendered altogether impracticable: and therefore, he desired that they would proceed regularly and calmly, lest by running precipitately into conclusions and inquiries, they should exasperate the distemper to such a degree, as to render all remedies ineffectual †."

Prudence of
Walpole.

In reply to this exhortation to mildness, Sir Joseph Jekyll enforced, by uncommon animation, the necessity of an immediate inquiry. He urged that it was absurd to attempt a cure before they were acquainted with the disorder; and was convinced that the wisdom of the house would not permit schemes to apply proper remedies. Walpole, finding that this speech had made a deep impression, did not insist on the previous question, and suffered the original motion to pass without a division. Several resolutions were accordingly carried, ordering the directors to deliver in an account of all their proceedings in relation to the execution of the South Sea act:

So great was the impatience of the commons, that on the 14th, complaints were made of the dilatoriness of the directors; on the 15th for their accounts were laid before the house; on the 19th, Sir Joseph

* T: Brodrick to Lord Middleton, December 13.—Correspondence, Period III.

† Political State for December 1727. Chandler.

moved for a select committee to inquire into all the proceedings relating to the South Sea act. The motion, however, was dropped, at the representation of Walpole, who observed, as on a former occasion, that public credit being in a bleeding condition, a speedy remedy should be applied, and therefore, any delay would be highly dangerous. This was immediately followed by invectives against stock-jobbers, to whose arts the public calamity was imputed; and a vote was passed, without any opposition, "that nothing can tend more to the establishment of public credit, than preventing the infamous practice of stock-jobbing*."

After passing this vote, which was on the following day formed into a bill, Walpole ventured to sound the temper of the house, in regard to the main question on which his scheme was founded. It was to promote the reduction of the national debt, by retaining that part of the South Sea act which would assist in promoting this end, and his speeches and conduct were uniformly directed to enforce this beneficial purpose. But a mistaken principle of justice and compassion seemed likely to prevent the success of his scheme, or at least retard its effects. With a view to alleviate the sufferers, it was proposed, among other things, to annul the contracts made by the South Sea company, to declare the subscriptions void, and to restore the proprietors of the public debts to their former state, or in other words, to leave the debt of the nation on the same footing on which it stood before the opening of the second South Sea subscription. To enforce this proposal, petitions were presented to the house from several proprietors of the irredeemable debts and lottery tickets, "praying that their case might be taken into serious consideration, and that they might be defended in their just rights against the illegal proceedings of the South Sea company, by forcing them to take stock for their debts, at a much higher rate than it would sell for; and admit them to be heard either by themselves or council, or grant them such other relief, as should be thought fit." This petition was warmly supported by Sir Joseph Jekyll, under the patriotic pretence of asserting public faith, equity, and justice, which had been notoriously violated by the directors.

In opposition to this specious, but impolitic proposal, Walpole explained the views with which the South Sea act was framed, which were to promote the landed and trading interest of the nation, by lessening the incumbrances, and reducing them to a method of being discharged in a few years. This salutary benefit would not, he added, be effected, unless a way had

* Political State for December.

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Dec. 19 and
20.

Walpole lays
his scheme
before the
house.
Dec 21.

been found to make the annuities for long terms redeemable, which been happily effected by the South Sea scheme, without a breach of parliamentary faith; and if they could now unravel what had been done, should not only ruin the South Sea company, but, instead of alleviating gravitate the present misfortunes; and he added, that if any injustice was to the subscribers, they were at liberty to seek relief by law *. He claimed the attention of the committee; and said, "That (as he before hinted) he had prepared a scheme for restoring public credit, that the execution of it depending upon a position which had been down as fundamental, he thought it proper, before he opened his scheme to be informed, whether he might rely on the main foundation, that *subscriptions of public debts and incumbrances, money subscriptions, and contracts made with the South Sea company, should remain in the present state*." This was the cause of two long and violent debates, after which it passed in the affirmative, by a majority of 232 against 88, with a reservation of these words, "unless altered for the ease and relief of the proprietors by a general court of the South Sea company, or set aside by due course of law †."

Having thus gradually smoothed his way, and obtained the avowal of the commons, that the subscriptions of the proprietors of the debt should be considered as valid, he brought forward his scheme; it was, in substance, to engraft nine millions of stock into the bank of England, the same sum into the East India company, on certain conditions; remaining twenty millions were to be left to the South Sea company. In his speech, recommending this plan, Walpole studiously avoided the introduction of any speculative topics, or any assertions which were not proved by papers before the house: He promised, and frequently repeated that he founded his calculations on the veracity of those statements ‡, and his prudence in that respect, silenced many cavils which must necessarily have arisen from assertions less closely connected with obvious and attainable proof. After a few objections, made by Hutcheson, and some other members, it was ordered, that proposals should be received from the bank of England, and the East India company, for restoring public credit. It passed, however with a warm, but fruitless opposition from the three companies, because neither derived from it any peculiar advantage; their proposals

* Political State, vol. 20. p. 586.

† Journals.—Chandler.—Political State.—
Brodrick's Letters. Correspondence, Period III.

‡ Thomas Brodrick to Lord Middelburgh, 22d December. Correspondence, P.

presented to the house, and a bill framed accordingly. In its passage through the commons, it was in some respects altered and amended; but the principal features were preserved. The chief management of the business was committed to Walpole, and though it was violently * opposed in its progress, yet his prudence and discretion either gave way to the general clamour, or submitted to various amendments, or his weight and eloquence, aided by the influence of government, obtained a majority in its favour: it passed the house of lords, and received the royal assent.

The good effects of Walpole's scheme were counteracted by the petulant opposition of the advocates for indiscriminate severity, and many unjust sarcasms and violent invectives were thrown out against its author. Amongst others, Shippen, the inflexible opposer of lenient measures, observed, that the house had hitherto done nothing towards the restoration of public credit: that indeed, a member of great parts and abilities had, at first, proposed a scheme for that purpose; but that instead of proving an effectual remedy, it appeared at last to be a mere palliative, which had rather inflamed than alleviated the distemper. That by this time the whole injured nation called aloud for vengeance; and if they neglected to hear the voice of the people, it would look as if they had a mind to provoke them to do themselves justice †. It was ever his opinion, that the only effectual means to restore credit, was to call those to a strict account, who had ruined it; and in particular, all such as had applied any part of the public money, intrusted in their hands, in stock-jobbing, and had raised vast fortunes by robbing the nation. He then moved, that an inquiry should be made what public money had been employed in stock-jobbing, or in the purchase of annuities, or other parliamentary securities, by any officer of the revenue, to their own private advantage, since the first day of December, 1719. Sir William Wyndham seconded the motion, and after animadverting on the profuse expenditure of the public money, and allowance of arrears, due to foreign troops, which had been taken into British pay, moved for copies to be laid before the house, of the several warrants and sign manuals, by virtue of which the late commissioners appointed to examine the debts of the army, issued any certificates.

Walpole having expressed his surprise and stated his objection to this motion; Lechmere observed, that he was neither for or against it, but he would freely tell the gentleman who opposed it, that while the nation was under

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Feb. 22.
Passes the
two houses.
March 22.

April 25.

* February 3, on the first reading, 165 to 118.—January 5, on the motion for adjourning the report, 153 against 140.—January 10,

against recommitting it, 267 to 134.—February 7, on the second reading, 237 to 139.

† Chandler.

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the pressure of heavy debts, he must expect that many motions would be made, for the purpose of finding out methods to ease the public burden. That as that gentleman was now in a higher post than formerly, a great more was expected from him; the rather, because the scheme which he proposed at the beginning of the session, for raising the stocks, and restoring public credit, had not had the desired effect. Walpole, moved at this intimation, could not contain his indignation. "It is known, he replied, that I was against the South Sea scheme, and have done all that lay in my power to hinder its taking place; but when the mischief was done, and things brought to such extremities, I thought it my duty, and therefore was willing to try the best method I could think of to extricate the nation out of its difficulties: I do not pretend to *work miracles*, but only to use my utmost endeavours towards retrieving the late misfortunes: with this honest intention I promoted a scheme which had been laid before me *, and appeared the most plausible of any then proposed, for restoring public credit: It cannot be denied, that while that scheme was pursued, it did some good, and kept up the price of stocks; and that they have fallen since it has been laid aside: I never intended however to raise stocks above their intrinsic value; for that would bring us again into the same unhappy circumstances which their extraordinary rise had before occasioned." He then lamented the ill disposition of some persons, who instead of concurring with others in remedying the present distempers, used all possible means to irritate the minds of the people, and concluded with a motion for appointing a day to consider the state of public credit, which was unanimously agreed to.

Although the engrafting scheme was not carried into execution, and superseded by † the bill which passed at the close of the session, for restoring public credit, yet it produced a beneficial effect, by calming the general contents, and inducing the proprietors of the national debt, who had severely suffered from the South Sea infatuation, to form hopes of relief from the efforts of parliament.

* By Jacombe, under secretary at war. See note, p. 139.

† Journals.—Political State for April and Chandler.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST:

1721.

Public Indignation against the Directors.—Proceedings in Parliament.—Report of the Committee of Secrecy.—Rigorous Treatment of the Directors.—Bill of Pains and Penalties.—Moderation of Walpole.—Defends Charles Stanhope.—Saves Sunderland.—Promotes the Bill for restoring Public Credit.—Advantages finally derived from the South Sea Scheme.—Arrears of the Civil List paid.—Controversy concerning the Bank Contract.

DURING the period in which this scheme was carrying through both houses of parliament, the loudest and most violent clamours were excited as well against the directors, as against the ministers who had promoted the South Sea act, which was considered as the sole cause of the national distress. The general infatuation in favour of the South Sea company was forgotten; and the frenzy of stock-jobbing was not taken into consideration. All the managers were indiscriminately involved in the same guilt; the very name of a director was synonymous with every species of fraud and villany. Petitions from counties, cities, and boroughs, in all parts of the kingdom, were presented to the house, crying for justice due to an injured nation against the villany of these speculators, and the sufferers looked up for indemnification from the confiscation of their property, or for vengeance in the punishment of their guilt. All those, who like Walpole opposed extreme severity and indiscriminate punishment, were exposed to repeated insults and virulent invectives; they were devoted, both in anonymous letters and public writings, to the speedy vengeance of a much injured people.

Indignation
of the public.

The popular frenzy seized parliament, and influenced their proceedings. On the recess, the house was divided into two parties; the one for applying an immediate remedy to the distress occasioned by the South Sea act, was superior to that for inquiring into the causes of the national misfor-

Parliamentary
proceed-
ings.

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1720 to 1727.

lift amounted to £. 70,000, Sunderland's to £. 160,000, Craggs's to £. 659 and Stanhope's to £. 47,000. That on the pawned stock which had sold, there was, by the means of Mr. Knight, a deficiency of £. 400. This report was succeeded by six others, less important; at the end of last, the committee declared that the absence of Knight, who had been principally, and often solely intrusted, put a period to their inquiries into this black and destructive affair.

Farther proceedings.

In consequence of the first of these reports, the house passed several resolutions, after which a bill was brought in for the relief of the sufferers by the South Sea company, the title of which, on the third reading, was changed into a bill for a raising money on the estates of the sub, and directors, governors, directors, cashier, deputy cashier, and accountant of the South Sea company, and of Mr. Aislaby and Mr. Craggs, towards making good the damages sustained by the company, and for disabling such of those persons as were living, to hold any place, or sit in parliament for the future. In consequence of these resolutions, the greater part of the estates belonging to the directors, and to other persons mentioned therein, were confiscated. The very large amount, and applied towards discharging the debts of the company. The estates of the directors alone were valued at £. 2,014,123. An allowance made to them was £. 354,600, the confiscation therefore, amounted to £. 1,659,523. Yet these enormous forfeitures did not satisfy the unrelenting advocates for extreme severity, many of whom expected nothing less than the confiscation of all * their property, and several were dissatisfied, because the punishment of death was not inflicted †.

Remarks on the occasion.

An eminent historian has justly remarked, that "the equity of many of these times must condemn the arbitrary proceedings which disgraced the cause of justice, by introducing a bill of pains and penalties, a retroactive statute to punish offences which did not exist when they were committed." "As to a bill of pains and penalties," he observes, "it is the common right of every subject to be heard by his council at the bar; they prayed to be heard, their prayer was refused; and their oppressors, who required no evidence, were listened to on no defence †."

* Insult was sometimes added to confiscation. On the motion for allowing Grigby £. 10,000, whose estate was valued at £. 31,687, a member observed, that since that upstart had once been so prodigally vain as to bid his coachman feed his horses with gold, no doubt he could feed on it himself; and therefore he

moved that he might be allowed as much as he could eat, and that the rest of his estate might go toward the relief of the sufferers in the political State. June 1721.

† Saint John Brodrick to Lord Mordaunt, May 24. Correspondence.

‡ Gibbon's Memoirs, p. 11.

Walpole however is exempted from this just censure : we have already mentioned his endeavours to stem the torrent of parliamentary vengeance, and to incline the sentiments of the house to terms of moderation ; and although the current of opinion ran violently against lenient measures, yet he did not shrink from avowing his sentiments, when any flagrant act of injustice was going to be committed ; thus, when a motion was made for declaring the estates of Craggs liable to the same forfeitures as those of the directors, and his two sons in law, who were both members of the house, requested to be heard by counsel in right of their wives, as daughters of the deceased ; he strenuously spoke in their favour. For his interposition he incurred censure, and was ironically complimented by Lechmere, as being fully capable to advise them, and to serve them as counsel ; an office he had already performed for so many others. Walpole finding that all appeals to reason and equity were ineffectual, and not willing to irritate the house, prudently returned no answer to this sarcasm, and the request was withdrawn.

Chapter 21.

1721.

Moderation
of Walpole.

At another period, when the directors prayed also to be heard by counsel, Walpole, though he avowed himself conscious, that any thing which might be interpreted in favour of a South Sea director, would be very ill heard, and subject the speaker to great disadvantages ; yet he defended their petition upon the just and obvious principle, that no criminal, however great, ought to be condemned unheard, or deprived of any advantage in making his defence.

The part of these transactions which involved Walpole in the greatest embarrassment, was the necessity of defending the ministry against those attacks, to which their conduct had laid them open, but which, had they been too closely scrutinised, would have occasioned discoveries extremely dangerous in the irritated state of the public mind, and produced changes fraught with danger and portentous of the greatest mischief. Stanhope had been charged by the report of the committee, with having taken, through Knight, £. 10,000 stock, without any valuable consideration, and with having bought, through Turner and company, £. 50,000 stock, at a very low price, by the difference of which he had gained £. 250,000. In proof of these averments, the examinations of Sir John Blunt, Holditch, Sawbridge, and Henry Blunt were read, and they were interrogated at the bar, but their testimony rather detracted from, than strengthened their former depositions ; and it was apparent as to the £. 10,000, that Stanhope had received no stock without a valuable consideration, and that as to the £. 50,000, his name had been used without his privity or consent. Yet the house was so little satis-

Defends
Charles Stan-
hope.

Feb. 28.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

March 8.
Aislaby ex-
pelled.

Walpole
saves Sun-
derland.

fied with this exculpation, that though Walpole and his brother Horatio erted great ability in his defence, he was acquitted by a majority of only, 180 to 177 *.

Aislaby's case was so flagrant, and his criminality verified by so proofs, that, on his first accusation in the house of commons, neither pole or his friends attempted to defend him; he was expelled the house committed to the Tower. But when the bill was brought in for subjecting his estates in common with those of the South Sea directors, Walpole served, that impeaching, not billing ministers, was the parliamentary rule. Our ancestors, treated the bill as a bill of attainder, and made a strong appeal to the compassion of the house, in favour of his wife and family †. From these efforts, he moved, that such parts of his property as had been in possession towards the end of the year 1719, before the South Sea bill was brought in, might be exempted from confiscation. This was, however, refused, and it was finally carried, that all the estate he possessed on the 1st of October 1718, should be allowed to him and his family.

To preserve Sunderland from the same censure which had involved Aislaby and would have involved secretary Craggs, had he lived, was the great object of the court. But as he was accused by the secret committee of having received, through Knight, £. 50,000 fictitious stock, without having made any payment, or given any security; and as the parliament had in many instances taken presumption for guilt, and appearances for realities, it was no matter to turn the sense of the house in favour of the minister, who was at the head of the treasury when the South Sea act was framed and carried. Under these inauspicious circumstances, Walpole, however, obtained the acquittal of Sunderland.

That part of the report which related to lord Sunderland, being proposed to be taken into consideration, was adjourned till the 15th of March, on pressing instances of Walpole ‡, as necessary for the farther information of the house, that several witnesses who had been examined by the committee should be re-examined at the bar; as they might vary in their depositions or give a different explanation to the words, which they had made use of in their examination. Having obtained this point, the object of which was to delay the business, for the purpose of gaining over several of the Whigs, he represented to them, that if they gave their votes against Sunderland, a

* Thomas Brodrick to Lord Middleton, March 7. Correspondence, Period III.—Political State.—Chandler.—Tindal,

† Brodrick's Letters. Correspondence. ‡ Ibid.

was disgracefully removed, their cause would suffer, and the Tories be called into power. These representations had a due weight, and brought over many to his purpose. The proof of the fact rested principally on the assertion of Knight, before he went off, as given on the oath of Sir John Blunt, who as president of the company, could not be supposed ignorant of the transaction; and who deposed to his having heard the particular declarations of Knight, that such stock had been taken, and a note of acknowledgment given by Sunderland. Of five directors examined at the bar, one could only affirm, that he was alone with Knight, when it was communicated to him; and two others acknowledged that Knight had informed them of the said circumstances in presence of Sir John Blunt, but could not positively ascertain whether he was within hearing. Walpole, who had in a previous debate on the case of Charles Stanhope, endeavoured to weaken the evidence and illiberally exposed the character of Sir John Blunt, as a fraudulent projector, pursued the same line of conduct with increased asperity. He declared himself authorised by Sunderland to deny the fact, and to avow that no such stock had been taken in his name, and no such note given, and reprobated the idea, that such hearsay evidence should operate to the ruin of the fortune and character of any man.

To Walpole, Sunderland was indebted for his acquittal. His personal weight, his authoritative and persuasive eloquence were effectually employed on this occasion, and, aided by the influence of government, met with success. The minister was acquitted by a majority of 61 votes, 233 against 172*.

Having obtained the acquittal of Sunderland, and secured the continuance of the Whig administration, of which he soon became the head, the great object of Walpole was directed to promote the restoration of public credit, which was in danger of being diminished, if not overturned, by the violent proceedings of the commons. In this delicate business he acted with his usual prudence, and though he could not in all instances prevent the adoption of measures which he did not approve, yet he mostly contrived either to delay their execution, or to mitigate their effect by various expedients.

As chairman of the committee, he drew up the address of the com-

* Chandler.—Although the public voice, notwithstanding his acquittal by so large a majority, criminated Sunderland; yet several extenuations may be urged in his favour. For it appears from private documents which have casually fallen under my inspection, that so early as July, he had refused to recommend to the directors any more lists for subscriptions; that he did not at least enrich himself or his friends; that he expressed great satisfaction, that neither himself or his friends had sold out any South Sea stock, as he would not have profited of the public calamity.—*Letters from Eckerfsal and Drummond to Daniel Pulteney, Correspondence, Period III.*

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

Advantages.
derived from
the South Sea
scheme.

Payment of
the civil list
debt.

*ease and quiet to the rest of my subjects, many of whom may, in such a insatiation, have been unwarily drawn in to transgress the laws *."*

Thus at length, by the ability, address, and perseverance of Walpole, the fatal project of the South Sea was converted into a national benefit; tressies are forgotten, and the advantages remain. Although by the sion of the seven millions, the public did not enjoy all the benefits had been sanguinely expected, yet much greater advantage was than is usually supposed. £. 632,698 of long and short annuities were converted into redeemable stock, which at this time bears an interest 3 per cent. and the interest on the company's capital was reduced Midsummer 1727 to 4 per cent. By this the public gained a £. 339,631, which, calculated at 25 years purchase, was worth 8 millions†. This reduction was also productive of great use and advantage; it was a precedent for future arrangements of a similar kind and in 1724, £. 3,775,027 was also reduced to 4 per cent.

In the midst of these distresses, from the decline of public credit, dearth of money, the enormous profusion of Sunderland's administration laid Walpole under the necessity of applying to parliament for the discharge of the debts of the civil list, which amounted to no less a sum than £. 500,000. To propose the laying on of new burdens on the people for the discharge of these arrears, in this moment of general calamity, would have been extremely unpopular, and perhaps not practicable. Walpole, therefore, upon an expedient which effectually succeeded, without imposing a national tax on the public at large. It was to make the civil list discharge its own arrears, by deducting six pence in the pound on all payments to the crown, towards raising a fund for liquidating the interest of the civil list required. The proposal being, on the 12th of July, laid before a committee of the whole house, Pulteney, who though not in opposition yet to be dissatisfied with the administration, moved for a deduction of one shilling in the pound, adding, that if this deduction were too small for the present occasion, it might be applied to the discharge of the civil list debts. This motion was carried by 153 voices against 63. On the 14th, this resolution being submitted to the house, was carried with greater effect by the friends of administration, and negative vote of a majority of 132 against 83. The original proposition was then agreed to and passed without a division, "That his majesty should be enabled to raise any sum not exceeding £. 500,000, to discharge the arrears of the civil list due and owing upon the civil list, to his servants and others, by sion

* Journals.

† Sinclair on the Revenue, Part 2. p. 106.

‡ Political State for July 1721.

§ Chandler.

yearly fund for payment of annuities, after the rate of five pounds per cent. per annum, out of the civil list revenues, until the same shall be redeemed by the crown; and that his majesty, his heirs and successors, be enabled to make good, for the uses of the civil government, all such money as from time to time shall have been paid thereupon, by causing a deduction, not exceeding six pence in the pound, to be made out of salaries, wages, pensions, or other payments from the crown*." Thus Walpole arranged this delicate business, which he was often heard to say † gave him much embarrassment, and on the successful issue of which he prided himself as much as on any other financial operation which he effected during the course of his administration.

The whole conduct of Walpole in the South Sea business, was sanctioned by both houses of parliament, and approved by the nation in general. No invective was thrown out against him, even by party, except that he had employed the power of government and his own influence in *screening* Sunderland; and that he had endeavoured to prevent the justice of the nation from overwhelming the projectors of the fatal South Sea scheme. For this cause, he was invidiously reviled in the periodical writings and pamphlets of the times, and Saint John Brodrick, in a letter to the lord chancellor Middleton, laments that the interposition of Walpole, whom he stigmatises by the name of the *Screen*, saved the directors from confiscation and hanging. But at the distance of fourteen years, the opposition accused him of having fraudulently proposed the bank contract, and of deluding the unhappy sufferers with false hopes of relief. It was asserted that he took a scandalous advantage of the general calamity, and made the misfortunes of his country the means of enriching himself; that he had preconcerted the project several months before with the bank, and that in order to engage the governors consent, he gave them private assurances of being released from their engagement, if it should prove unfavourable.

This attack on the character of Walpole was managed, in the Craftsman, and other antiministerial writings ‡, with all the art and strength which could be supplied by the sophistry of Bolingbroke, and the wit of Pulteney. The charge was also rendered more plausible by the concurrence of Aislabie, who, in conjunction with secretary Craggs, had been considered as the principal manager of the business on the side of government, and was present at the meeting in which the contract was signed. This heinous charge was

* Journals.—Political State.—Chandler.

† From Lord Orford.

‡ Case of the Sinking Fund, Craftsman for 1735.

Period III.

1720 to 1727.

answered by the minister himself, and by the writers * in his interest. Without entering into a tedious inquiry on this subject, or attempting to review the conduct of Walpole in every particular, I shall observe, that on a review of the whole controversy, it appears that an accusation urged *for the first time* fourteen years after the fact, when it was impossible for him to recollect all the circumstances, and to justify every part of the transaction, was malicious in itself, and undeserving of credit. It may be also remarked that the assertions of Aislabie, cannot be admitted as fair evidence in his cause; and that he falsely arraigned the minister, may be implied from a private letter † written in 1722, in which he frankly confessed his own error and weakness in promoting the South Sea scheme, and expressed, in the strongest terms, his gratitude for the kindness and lenity shewn to him by the government, which he solely imputes to the interference of Walpole.

In regard to the most heinous part of the charge, that he had first induced the bank to accede to the agreement, and “ afterwards released them from the obligation, when his own private purposes were served;” the bank contract, it was answered, being precipitately drawn up in the midst of general alarm and despondency, and at the earnest importunity of the ministers and South Sea directors, there could be no collusion betwixt him and the bank, and no blame could attach to him, because the governors refused to accede to the terms of an agreement they had reluctantly acceded to, which if fulfilled, would have involved the bank and South Sea company in ruin.

It must not be omitted, that soon after the bank contract was drawn up, and the ingraftment scheme had passed, he was accused of *favouring the bank in preference to the South Sea company*, that he might sell out the money he had in the bank at an advanced price. But as in reply to this attack, he publicly declared in the house of commons, that he had not one penny in the bank at that juncture, but possessed a large stock in the South Sea company, his opponents afterwards, in 1735, reversed the accusation, and declared that he had adopted those measures to *favour the South Sea in preference to the bank*, that he might sell out the money he had in that stock at an advanced price. These two contradictory assertions destroy each other, and prove the weakness of both.

* Some Considerations on the Public Funds, Gazetteer for 1735, passim.

† Correspondence, Period III.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND:

1721—1722.

Townshend appointed Secretary of State on the Death of Earl Stanhope, and Walpole First Lord of the Treasury, on the Resignation of Sunderland.—Supports the Swedish Subsidy.—Affairs of Sweden to the Peace of Nyfadt.—Domestic Transactions.—Commercial Regulations.—Abolition of various Duties.—Importation of Naval Stores encouraged.—Advancement of national Industry.—Dean Tucker's Eulogium of Walpole.

THE death of earl Stanhope, and the accusation of Sunderland, opened the way to the re-establishment of Townshend and Walpole in their former places: for although Sunderland had been acquitted by a considerable majority, yet the public opinion was too unfavourable for him to be continued in the office of, first lord of the treasury. The negotiation for settling the new administration had been entrusted, by Devonshire and Townshend, to the management of Walpole; and it was not without great difficulty that Sunderland, who maintained the most unbounded influence over the sovereign, had been induced, or rather compelled, to consent to the proposed arrangement, and particularly to relinquish the disposal of the secret service money*; but he at length acceded. Townshend had been previously appointed secretary of state on the death of Stanhope. Methuen was made comptroller of the household, Walpole first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer, and a new board, consisting of his confidential friends†, was nominated at his discretion.

Almost the first measure of government which Walpole supported in the house of commons after his elevation, seemed to belie his conduct while in opposition, for which he has been bitterly reproached by those writers who perceive no difference between opposing a treaty before it is concluded, and supporting the national honour by adhering to it when ratified.

The death of Charles the Twelfth was the prelude to the pacification of the north; and changed the situation of Sweden, and the system of English

February 4.
Townshend
secretary of
state.

Walpole first
lord of the
treasury.

April 2.
1721.

Supports the
Swedish sub-
sidy.

Affairs of
Sweden.

* Pulteney's Answer to one Part of a late infamous Libel, p. 55.

† Sir George Bailey, Sir Charles Turner, Henry Pelham, Richard Edgcumbe.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

politics in that quarter. On that event, Charles Frederic duke of Holstein Gottorp, the son of Hedwige, eldest sister of Charles, was the next heir; and if hereditary right had prevailed, would have succeeded to the throne. But the preponderating party in Sweden, espoused the pretensions of Ulrica Eleonora, youngest sister of the deceased monarch, who was married to Frederic prince of Hesse Cassel.

The news of the king's death no sooner reached Stockholm, than the senate repaired to the apartment of Ulrica, and congratulated her on her accession to the throne*; at the same time the new queen declared her consent to renounce that absolute power which Charles the Eleventh had vested in the crown, and which had proved the source of many calamities to Sweden. Her title was soon afterwards acknowledged by the army, in opposition to the remonstrances of the duke of Holstein, who laid claim to the throne as his right by hereditary descent; and the pretensions of his rival were confirmed by the states, which assembled at Stockholm on the 20th of January 1719. In that assembly, count Horn, a nobleman of great distinction and capacity, observed in full senate, and in the presence of the queen, with whom he had concerted the declaration, that both Ulrica and her sister Hedwige had forfeited their title to the crown, because their marriages had not been confirmed by the states. On the meeting of the states, Ulrica delivered a memorial, in which she disclaimed all pretensions, and that the throne being vacant, they might proceed to an election. On this formal renunciation, Ulrica Eleonora was elected by the states, and gave her consent to the new form of government, which rendered the sovereign of Sweden, from the most absolute, the most limited monarch in Europe. The new queen, or rather the senate, who possessed the whole power of government, had sufficient occupation to deliver the country from the dreadful situation to which it had been reduced by a war of twenty years, and to conclude terms of pacification with Hanover, Prussia, Denmark, Poland, and Russia.

Before the death of Charles the Twelfth, a congress had been held in the Isle of Aland, between the Swedish and Prussian plenipotentiaries; and had the Swedish monarch lived, Baron Gortz could have reconciled Peter and Charles, both equally incensed against George the First; and a combined army of Swedes and Russians, after conquering Norway, would have landed in Scotland for the purpose of placing the Pretender on the throne of Great Britain.

* Lagerbring Hist. de Suede.

On the death of Charles, George, though involved in disputes with Spain, yet secure of the co-operation of France, dispatched Carteret and Bassewitz to break up the congress of Aland, and to prevent the pacification between Russia and Sweden, from a dread, lest their union should render his mediation unnecessary, and induce Sweden to decline confirming the cession of Bremen and Verden. Carteret succeeded in his negotiation, and is applauded, though not without regret, by the Swedish historians *, for the consummate address with which he prevailed on Sweden to conclude a separate peace with Hanover, which was followed by a subsidiary alliance with England, under the mediation and guarantee of France.

Chapter 22.

1721 to 1722.

Before the pacification was finally concluded, Sweden suffered severely for breaking off the congress of Aland. The Danes took Marstrand, the Gibraltar of the north, and threatened Gotheborg. Forty thousand Russians landed in different parts of Sweden, and carried havoc and destruction into the kingdom, reduced eight towns, and above 1,300 villages to ashes †. The arrival of the English fleet put a temporary stop to this invasion, and hastened the peace of Sweden with Hanover, Prussia, and Denmark. Carteret, supported by the presence of an English fleet in the Baltic, deluded Sweden ‡ with promises to assist in wresting from Russia the conquered provinces, and prevailed on her to confirm the cession of Bremen and Verden to Hanover; Stetin and the district between the Oder and Pene, to Prussia; to renounce the claims of exemption from the Sound duties, and to engage not to assist the duke of Holstein, should he attempt the recovery of Sleswic. Denmark gave back to Sweden Marstrand, Stralsund, and the Isle of Wismar for 600,000 rixdollars, relinquished her alliance with Russia; and, as an indemnification for the conquests restored, England and France gratified Denmark by guarantying Sleswic §.

Peter, incensed at these treaties, which exposed him singly to the united forces of Sweden and England, did not lose courage, but continued his invasion of Sweden, which the English fleet could not prevent; arrested the English merchants who were settled in his dominions, and his resident in London delivered a strong memorial against the insolent interposition of Great Britain.

In consequence of the Russian invasion, Sweden had recourse to England for assistance. The king sent a fleet into the Baltic, and applied to parlia-

Proceedings
in parlia-
ment.* Lagerbring, *Hist. de Suede*.† Schuidt *Russ. Gesch.* vol. 2. p. 308.

‡ Lagerbring.

§ Mallet, *Hist. de Danemar.*

Period III.
1720 to 1727.
June 19.

ment for a subsidy of £. 72,000, according to the terms stipulated by treaty of alliance. The motion to make good these engagements was violently opposed in the house of commons by Sir William Wyndham, Ship and lord Moleworth, who had long resided in Denmark, and who published an excellent account of that kingdom. He ably contended, that the alliance was contrary to former treaties with Denmark and Russia; that it was unjust to insist that Peter should restore his conquests, while other princes retained the spoils of Sweden; and that the only equitable mode of proceeding, was for Prussia to restore Stetin, and the elector of Hanover, Bremen and Verden; he artfully insinuated that the claim to Mecklenburgh was one of the causes which occasioned the rupture with Russia; urged that England ought not to intermeddle with the affairs of the empire; and that the securing of naval stores was the principal advantage of our trade to the Baltic. To these strong arguments Walpole could only reply, that the subsidy allowed to Sweden and the mission of the squadron to the Baltic had been stipulated by former engagements, which, if not complied with, would affect national honour. But the chief motive which induced the parliament to grant this subsidy, was the declaration that another would not be demanded, as preliminaries between Russia and Sweden were wholly settled; yet so strong were the objections to the hostilities against Russia, that the motion for the subsidy was only carried by a majority of 59*.

Peace of
Nyftadt.

September.

Sweden deriving no effectual assistance from England, was compelled to receive the terms of peace dictated by Russia; and Peter, refusing to accept of the mediation of a power which had offended him, granted, under the guarantee of France, the peace of Nyftadt. Sweden ceded to Russia Livonia, Estonia, Ingria, part of Carelia, and the district of Viborg in Finland. In return Peter restored the remaining part of Finland, paid 2,000,000 rixdollars (£. 500,000) as an indemnification for Livonia, and promised not to interfere in the domestic concerns of Sweden.

During these transactions, Ulrica Eleonora had resigned the crown in favour of her husband Frederick the First, who purchased his election by confirming all limitations of prerogative to which the queen had consented. This transfer of the crown occasioned many discontents, increased the party of the Stein faction, gave to Peter the Great the means of gaining a strong party in the senate, and enabled him to foment the internal discontents natural to a popular government; it exposed the country to future conflicts in the north, and entailed on the British administration, a series of complicated and difficult negotiations.

Walpole had scarcely settled the business of the South Sea, and restored public credit, when he turned his attention to trade and manufactures, and gave a convincing proof of his liberal and extensive views. On being again placed at the head of the treasury, he found the foreign trade shackled with numerous petty duties and impoverishing taxes, which obstructed the exportation of our manufactures, and lessened the importation of the most necessary commodities. Walpole framed the noble plan of abolishing at once all these restrictions, and giving freedom to the most valuable branches of our external and internal commerce.

The speech delivered from the throne at the opening of the seventh and last session of this ever memorable parliament, in conformity to this plan, is justly praised by Uztariz *, an eminent Spanish writer, as a model of good sense and liberality of spirit. It was drawn up by Walpole, and contains the great outlines of the salutary plan which he had formed for the extension of trade.

“ In this situation of affairs, we should be extremely wanting to ourselves, if we neglected to improve the favourable opportunity which this general tranquillity gives us, of extending our commerce, upon which the riches and grandeur of this nation chiefly depend. It is very obvious, that nothing would more conduce to the obtaining so public a good, than to make the exportation of our own manufactures, and the importation of the commodities used in the manufacturing of them, as practicable and as easy as may be; by this means, the balance of trade may be preserved in our favour, our navigation increased, and greater numbers of our poor employed. I must therefore recommend it to you, gentlemen of the house of commons, to consider how far the duties upon these branches may be taken off, and replaced, without any violation of public faith, or laying any new burthen upon my people. And I promise myself, that by a due consideration of this matter, the produce of those duties, compared with the infinite advantages that will accrue to the kingdom by their being taken off, will be found so inconsiderable, as to leave little room for any difficulties or objections.

“ The supplying ourselves with naval stores upon terms the most easy and least precarious, seems highly to deserve the care and attention of parliament. Our plantations in America naturally abound with most of the proper materials for this necessary and essential part of our trade and maritime strength; and if by due encouragement, we could be furnished from thence with those naval stores, which we are now obliged to purchase, and bring from foreign

Chapter 22.
1721 to 1722.
Commercial
regulations.

October 19,
1721.

King's
speech.

* Uztariz, Theory and Practice of Commerce, ch. 28. vol. 1. p. 131.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

Abolition of
various du-
ties.

Importation
of naval
stores en-
couraged.

Tucker's
eulogium of
Walpole.

countries, it would not only greatly contribute to the riches, influence, and power of this nation, but, by employing our own colonies in this useful and advantageous service, divert them from setting up, and carrying on manufactures which directly interfere with those of Great Britain *."

In consequence of this recommendation, one hundred and six articles of British manufacture were allowed to be exported, and thirty-eight articles of raw materials to be imported duty free.

The other great object recommended in the speech, which regarded the importation of naval stores from the American colonies, was effected in the same session. It had long been a matter of complaint, that naval stores, which were principally drawn from the Baltic, were clogged with numerous difficulties, and raised to an enormous price. It was found, on inquiry into the commerce with Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and the Hanseatic towns, that the imports exceeded the exports to the amount of more than £. 200,000; it was proved that since the Russia company had engrossed the trade to that country, the price of tar had been doubled, and it was likewise notorious, that the supplies of naval stores might be prohibited, should England be at war with Russia, and the Czar, with a view to increase his own navy, insist that naval stores should only be exported in Russian vessels. It was an obvious remark, that since these commodities were necessary for the navy, it was impolitic to be at the mercy of a foreign prince, especially as we might be supplied from our own plantations on easier terms, and in exchange for our own manufactures. Such were the motives which induced Walpole to countenance a bill for encouraging the introduction of naval stores, and granting bounties and premiums to the importers of them from our colonies in North America.

It is the observation of a judicious writer †, that the advancements which have been made in shipping, commerce, manufactures, and in all kinds of industry, since the passing of this law, have been prodigious; and it cannot be denied, even by the bitterest enemies of the minister, that this national improvement was principally due to his liberal and enlarged spirit. He adds, "I am persuaded, that impartial posterity will acknowledge, that if ever a statesman deserved well of the public, Sir Robert Walpole was that man." And yet none of the English historians have paid a due tribute of applause to these beneficial exertions of ministerial capacity; while some of them enter, with a tedious minuteness, into a detail of foreign transactions, and echo from one to the other the never-failing topic of Hanoverian influence; while they

* Chandler, vol. 6. p. 263.

† Tucker's Theory of Commerce, p. 149.

printed, but never published.—Anderson on Commerce.—Chalmers's Estimate, p. 96.

dwell with malignant pleasure on those parts of his conduct, which in their opinion, prove the ascendancy of influence and corruption; while they repeat the speeches and reproaches of opposition, they suffer these salutary regulations, which ought to render the name of Walpole dear to every Englishman, to be principally confined to books of rates and taxes, and only to be mentioned by commercial writers.

Although Sunderland had resigned all his official employments, yet he still retained his influence at court, and never heartily coalesced with the new ministers. He had obtained the appointment of lord Carteret to be secretary of state in the place of Craggs, who died on the 16th of February, and the presidency of the council for lord Carleton, in preference to the duke of Devonshire, who was supported by all the influence of Townshend and Walpole. He fomented a division in the cabinet, and carried several points in opposition to the other members.

The conduct of Sunderland at this period, is involved in so much mystery, as to leave his character open to every suspicion. It is impossible to ascertain to what fatal purpose he meant to employ his ascendancy over his sovereign, or to what extremes he might have been driven by his disgust against the prince of Wales; he intrigued with the Tories, and * made overtures to bishop Atterbury. He proposed, at a time when the ferment occasioned by the South Sea scheme was at its extreme height, to dissolve the parliament, and induced the king to sanction his views, by persuading him that there was not money enough in the treasury to secure the return of a Whig majority, and that the Tories, under his influence, would screen the projectors of the South Sea, and suppress all inquiry on the subject. But this dangerous and insidious proposal was over-ruled by the sagacity and intrepidity of Walpole, who represented the extreme danger and impolicy of the measure, and took on himself the charge of finding the sums necessary to support the Whig majority †. Sunderland did not dare to avow any intimate connection with, or preference of the Tories, and was obliged to yield to these arguments and assurances; but the Pretender and the Jacobites certainly, at this time, entertained the most sanguine hopes. Sunderland became a great favourite with them and the Tories, his health was constantly drank ‡ by them, and they affected to be secure of attaining, by his means, the accomplishment of their wishes.

Not all the services which Walpole had performed to his king, to his country, not even his merit in screening Sunderland from the rage of the house of

Chapter 22.
1721 to 1722.

Influence of
Sunderland
not diminished.

Mystery of
his conduct.

* Walpole Papers.

† Etough.

‡ Secret Intelligence.—Townshend Papers.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

His attempt
to remove
Walpole, de-
feated.

Death of
Sunderland.

commons, could expiate the crime of having superseded that ambitious domineering minister at the head of the treasury, who dreaded his abilities, popularity, and who saw in him a rival not unlikely to supplant him in confidence and favour of the sovereign. Sunderland, jealous of his growing power, determined either to remove him from his situation in the house of commons, or again to obtain his dismissal. Under the semblance of favour he requested the king to create him postmaster general for life; a lucrative office, which if he had received would have incapacitated him from sitting in parliament, and if he refused, would subject him to the resentment of his sovereign. Contrary, however, to his expectations, George inquired if Walpole had desired it, or was acquainted with it: Sunderland replied the negative: "then" returned the king, "do not make him the offer, I part with him once against my inclination, and I will never part with him as long as he is willing to serve me *." This unexpected demur suspended the designs of Sunderland; and his death, which happened on the 19th April 1722, prevented his attempts to remove Walpole, which, considering his influence and ascendancy, might have been finally successful.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD:

1722—1723.

Meeting of the new Parliament.—Atterbury's Plot.—Memoirs.—Bill of Indulgences and Penalties.—Conduct in Exile.—Death.—Tax on the Estates of Roman Catholics, and Non-jurors.

Meeting of
the new par-
liament.

Atterbury's
plot.

THE parliament, in pursuance of the opinion of Walpole, was not dissolved until the 10th of March, a few days before it would have dissolved by the natural death. The new parliament assembled on the 19th of October; and soon appeared, that the promise of Walpole to obtain a majority of Whigs was fulfilled.

During the ferment of the general election, the plot of which bishop Atterbury was the head, was detected, and from the mention of it in the king's speech, it became the first object which engaged the attention of the legislature.

* Horace Walpole to Etough, July 31, 1731. Correspondence, Period III.

ture. As Walpole, from his situation and intelligence, procured the earliest information of this conspiracy, and took an active share in the prosecution, I shall throw together a few anecdotes of bishop Atterbury, and add such new information as can be derived from the Orford and Walpole Papers.

Chapter 23.
1722 to 1723.

Francis Atterbury was born at Middleton, near Newport Pagnel, in Buckinghamshire, in 1662. He received his education at Westminster school, and was from thence elected a student of Christ Church College Oxford. At both places he took indefatigable pains in improving himself, and at a very early period, was distinguished for the elegance of his taste, and his knowledge of classical literature, which he displayed in a Latin version of Dryden's *Abfalom* and *Achitophel*, and a translation of some odes of Horace. In the 24th year of his age he proved his talents in controversial writing, by vindicating Martin Luther, in a publication, which induced Burnet to rank him among those eminent divines who had signalised themselves by their admirable defences of the Protestant religion. On taking orders, he acquired a high reputation by his talent in preaching, and by supporting, against Hoadly and Wake, the doctrines of the high church. Bred up in Tory principles, he wrote in favour of passive obedience, and displayed so much learning and ingenuity, that he was chosen prolocutor of the lower house of convocation, and chiefly managed the affairs in that assembly. A similarity of opinion induced him warmly to espouse the cause of his friend Sacheverel, and he is supposed to have had the principal share in drawing up the masterly defence which the doctor delivered at his trial. He was first patronised by Sir Joseph Trelawney, bishop of Exeter; appointed by the Tory administration of queen Anne, dean of Christ church, and, in 1713, advanced, at the recommendation of the earl of Oxford, to the bishopric of Rochester and deanery of Westminster. At that period he was in such high estimation with the queen and ministry, that he was not unfrequently consulted in points of the utmost importance; he was always inimical to the succession of the Hanover line, and on the death of queen Anne, was accused, by Harcourt, of having offered to assist at the proclamation of the Pretender, in his lawn sleeves; and when Ormond and Bolingbroke declined taking any vigorous step, is reported to have exclaimed, "Never was a better cause lost for want of spirit." It is certain that he was involved in the schemes of Bolingbroke, and a letter from that minister * soon after the queen's death, proves the extreme confidence reposed in him.

Account of
Atterbury.

On the accession of George the First, he received evident marks of coldness from the new sovereign; and on the breaking out of the rebellion, gave

* Macpherson's Papers, vol. 2. p. 651.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

an instance of his disaffection, by refusing to sign the declaration of the shops, in favour of the crown. He uniformly employed his great eloquence in the house of lords, in opposing the measures of government; and in bringing up the most violent protests. Atterbury was of a restless aspiring temper, and eager to obtain the highest honours of the church, which he would certainly have acquired, had not queen Anne died. The active part which he had taken during her reign, against the succession of the house of Brunswick, and his uniform opposition to the government of the new sovereign, excluded him from all expectations of promotion. But when Sunderland courted the Tories, and made overtures to him as to the leader of the affected party, his conduct was so equivocal, that his friends * reproached him with having deserted his principles; and his enemies did not hesitate to assert that he had engaged in a conspiracy against the government, because his demand of the bishoprick of Winchester was rejected. There seems, however, to be no foundation for these reflections; it is probable, that in listening to the overtures of Sunderland, he conceived hopes, that the minister was inclined to promote the cause of the Pretender, and that Sunderland was duped by him, rather than that he was duped by Sunderland. And if we may judge from the inflexibility of his character, there is reason to believe that he rejected all offers of promotion, and was never inclined to desert his party †.

Conspiracy
discovered by
the regent.

It appears from Sir Luke Schaub's correspondence from Paris ‡, that the first intimation of the conspiracy in which he was engaged, came from the regent duke of Orleans, to whom the agents of the Pretender communicated the plot, in hopes of receiving assistance from him, and that he betrayed them to the king of England.

Habeas corpus
suspended.

In consequence of his full conviction of the truth and danger of the conspiracy, Walpole took a very active share in conducting the prosecution. He first mentioned it to the house, when the bill for suspending the habeas corpus act was opposed, and a motion made to limit its duration to six months. This motion being strongly and ably seconded, seemed on the point of being carried, when Walpole laid before the house some particulars of the conspiracy; he said, "That this wicked design was formed at Christmas last; that the conspirators had at first made application to the potentates abroad, for an assistance of 5,000 men: that being denied afterwards, about the month of April, made farther application, and obtained instances for 3,000; that being again disappointed in their expectations of foreign assistance, they resolved desperately to go on, confiding in their own strength, and fondly depending on the disaffection of England; and

* Prior, to Swift, April 25, 1721.—Swift's Letters, vol. 2.

† Biographia Britannica.—Article Atterbury.

ry.—Memoirs of his Life prefixed to his Miscellaneous Works by Nicholls.

‡ Hardwicke Papers.

their first attempt was to have been the seizing of the bank, the exchequer, and other places where the public money was lodged : that although government had undoubted informations of this plot ever since May last ; no persons had been apprehended, because there being then two terms coming on together, they would have had the benefit of the *habeas corpus* act, and their arrest was deferred till the long vacation." He added, " That the traiterous designs against his majesty's person and government had been projecting ever since the death of the late queen ; and evident proofs would appear that there had been a meeting of some considerable persons, one of whom was not far off, wherein it had been proposed to proclaim the Pretender at the Royal Exchange ; that an exact account of this detestable conspiracy would, in due time, be laid before parliament." He concluded, by observing, " that although it was true, that the *habeas corpus* act had never before been suspended for above six months ; yet, as the lords had made this suspension for a whole year, if the commons should propose any alteration, it might occasion a difference between the two houses, which, at this time of jealousy and danger, might be attended with bad effects in foreign courts *." Accordingly the bill was carried by a majority of 246 against 193.

Bills of pains and penalties having been passed against the inferior agents, Plunket, Kelly, and Lyster, that of the bishop became the object of general attention. In consequence of the report of the committee, a bill was brought into the house of commons, for subjecting him to banishment and deprivation. On receiving a copy of the bill, he wrote a letter to the speaker, requiring to have the assistance of counsel and solicitors in making his defence, which was granted. Having obtained this indulgence, he laid before the house of lords, a petition, stating that, by an order of their house, no lord might appear by counsel before the house of commons, that he was under great difficulties how to act, and requesting their directions. It was accordingly moved, " That the bishop being a lord of parliament, ought not to answer, or make his defence by counsel, or otherwise, in the house of commons, to a bill there depending." This motion produced an argument of some length, which was terminated by the observation of the duke of Wharton, " That the bishop having already applied to the house of commons, in a letter to their speaker, for counsel, it was preposterous now for him to pray the lords not to give him leave to be heard before the commons, which was the drift of his petition." And upon a second question, leave was given for him to be heard by his counsel, or otherwise, as he might think proper. Left

Chapter 23.
1722 to 1723.

1722.

Bill of pains
and penalties
against Atter-
bury.

March 22d.

25th.

29th.

4th April.

* Chandler.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

9th.

27th May.

thus to his own discretion, on the day he was expected to have made his defence, he sent a letter to the speaker, stating, "That he should decline giving that house any trouble, contenting himself with the opportunity, if the bill went on, of making his defence before another, of which he had the honour to be a member." The bill having passed the commons, was sent up to the lords, and on the 6th of May, he was brought to the bar to make his defence; he made a long and artful speech himself, and his counsel, Sir Constantine Phipps and Mr. Wynne, displayed great zeal and ability; but the bill finally passed the lords, and received the royal assent *.

The conspiracy in which Atterbury was concerned, and for which he was exiled, has shared the fate of many other plots which have not been carried into execution. It was at the time credited by one party, and disbelieved by the other; and even subsequent writers have, according to their principles, considered it as real or pretended. The public opinion of the minister is sufficiently known from the active part which he took in discovering and counteracting the conspiracy, and his private opinion is detailed in a confidential letter which he wrote to his brother Horace, then envoy at the Hague; about three months before Atterbury was arrested †.

It would be needless as well as tedious to canvass the principal arguments for or against bishop Atterbury. It will be sufficient to observe that the proofs of his guilt, though not derived from positive, but from circumstantial and presumptive evidence, were as strong as the nature of the case would admit of; considering the early period at which the plot was discovered, and the great art and talents of the culprit, they were such as to stamp on the impartial mind, the most indelible conviction. It was indeed a strong proof of the lenity of government, that a bill of attainder was not brought in against him, and that he was only punished with deprivation and banishment.

His popularity;

The commitment of the bishop of Rochester to the Tower, had occasioned great clamours. Under pretence of his being afflicted with the gout, he was publicly prayed ‡ for in most of the churches of London and Westminster, and a print of him was circulated, in which he was represented looking through the grate of a prison, and holding in his hand a portrait of archbishop Laud, with some verses, commiserating his situation, and calling him

----- "a second Laud,
" Whose christian courage nothing fears but God."

* Journals.—State Trials.—Chandler.—
Lords' Debates.—Tindal.—Speaker Onslow
on Opposition, Correspondence, Period IV.

† May 29th, 1722, Correspondence, Period III.

‡ Political State, vol. 4. p. 21.

It was also apprehended, that his removal on board the ship which was to convey him into banishment, would have been the signal of insurrection, but no tumults took place. Walpole, in a letter to Townshend, dated Whitehall, June 20, 1723, thus speaks of his embarkation :

Chapter 23.

1722 to 1723

“ The late bishop of Rochester went away on Tuesday. The croud that attended him before his embarkation was not more than was expected ; but great numbers of boats attended him to the ship’s side. Nothing very extraordinary, but the duke of Wharton’s behaviour, who went on board the vessel with him ; and a free conversation betwixt his holiness and Williamson * ; with menaces of a day of vengeance.”

Many reports have been circulated concerning the severity with which Atterbury was treated in the Tower ; but upon a candid examination of the facts alledged by the bishop and his friends, we have no reason to imagine that he underwent more rigour than a state prisoner accused of a treasonable conspiracy usually meets with. The following instance of lenity is not generally known. He was arrested in August 1722 ; The articles of impeachment were brought into the house the 23d of March 1723, passed the house of commons on the 9th of April ; he spoke in his own defence on the 6th of May, and on the 27th, the king gave his royal assent to the bill of pains and penalties. During the interval between his impeachment and condemnation, several chapters were permitted to be held, under his auspices as dean of Westminster, and the subdean was allowed to act as his proxy. During the month of May, not less than eight chapters were held for signing leases, and on the 31st, it was agreed “ That the lease of the manor of Pensham be *now* sealed and lie in the chapter clerk’s hands as an escrole, till the bills he has sent up for the fines are due and paid, this being the last chapter likely to be held till another dean be made, and that the present dean have his proportion of the fine †.” This unusual mode of proceeding, by which a very considerable fine was, before payment, reserved for Atterbury, was entirely owing to the connivance, if not to the interference of government, for it is a well known fact, that the bishop of Rochester had offended the chapter by his overbearing behaviour.

Atterbury received the tribute of applause from the first poets of his time : Swift, Pope, and Gay have not omitted to pay high encomiums to his talents and learning. Gay observes, in his Epistle to Pope,

Highly
esteemed b
Pope, &c.

“ See Rochester approving nods his head,
“ And ranks one modern with the mighty dead.”

* Governor of the Tower.

† I am indebted for the communication of these particulars, taken from the Chapter Books,

to a friend who is a prebendary of Westminster.

Period III. Pope, in his Epilogue to the Satires, describes his unshaken firmness and
 1720 to 1727. resignation in the hour of prosecution:

“ How pleasing Atterbury’s softer hour;
 “ How shines his soul unconquer’d in the Tower.”

Pope and Swift kept up a constant correspondence with him during his exile, and always expressed the highest sentiments of veneration and respect for his character. Pope, in particular, almost idolised his banished friend, and was fully convinced of his honour and integrity, and that he was of a mind too noble to be led by the spirit of vengeance to cabal against his country.

How ignorant Pope was of his real character, and how much Atterbury belied his admirable portrait of a good and wise man in exile*, neither acting from a principle of resentment, or impelled by revenge, was proved by his subsequent conduct. He had no sooner landed on the Continent, than he threw himself into the service of the Pretender, and became the principal agent of his affairs, first at Brussels, and afterwards in France.

The advocates of Atterbury have in vain endeavoured to deny or palliate this fact; and to impress a belief that he never attempted to excite a rebellion in England; and that for the purpose of avoiding solicitations from the Jacobites, he quitted Paris, and went to Montpellier in 1728, where he resided above two years†: but the contrary is proved from the most unquestionable evidence, from his private correspondence with the rebels in Scotland, in 1725, published by Sir David Dalrymple; from the repeated accounts transmitted by Horace Walpole, during his embassy at Paris; from the information of spies, who discovered his cabals, and from the correspondence between him and his son-in-law Mr. Morice, of which extracts are given in the second volume. It appears also, from his own account‡, that he quitted managing the affairs of the Pretender in 1728, from disgust, and not from principle.

Cabals with
the Jacobites.

In fact, Atterbury was of too aspiring a temper to act a secondary part: he expected to have been the principal manager of the cabals in France, and to have been employed in carrying on the correspondence with the disaffected in England. But on finding that lord Mar and Dillon were more trusted than

* Letter from Pope to Atterbury, Pope’s Works, vol. 5. p. 354.

† Miscellaneous Works of Bishop Atterbury, by John Nichols.

‡ Letter from Bishop Atterbury to Mr. Morice, Epistolary Correspondence, vol. 4. p. 161.

himself,

himself, he endeavoured to undermine their influence. With this view he entered into cabals with Murray and Hay, whose wife was the Pretender's mistress, and the cause that his consort, the princess Maria Clementina, had retired into a convent, and publicly demanded a separation. Although Atterbury was scandalised at the Pretender's inconsistent conduct, and disgusted with the influence of Hay, yet he meanly condescended to join in intrigues with him and Murray, justified the Pretender, reviled his consort, and predicted that she would repent of her indiscretion when her husband was restored to the throne of his ancestors, which event his sanguine expectation again led him to consider as not far distant. He had no sooner succeeded in destroying the influence of Mar and Dillon, than he became jealous of Hay and Murray, reviled the Pretender, justified his consort, and retired from Paris, expressing a conviction that the follies and vices of his attainted sovereign excluded all hopes of effectually serving him. During his residence at Montpellier, he affected a love of retirement, and a fondness for the calm pleasures of a country life; but in the midst of these philosophical reveries he did not relinquish his cabals for supplanting Hay and Murray, and after a year's continuance at Montpellier, returned to Paris for the purpose of completing his scheme*.

At this period his conduct was remarkable for duplicity: for while he seemed absorbed in projects for obtaining the ascendancy in the court of the Pretender, he was looking forwards to England with fond expectations of an act of grace. Soon after his return to Paris, he held frequent conferences in the Bois de Boulogne, with the Duchess of Buckingham, natural daughter of James the Second, for the ostensible purpose of giving her advice concerning the education of her son. The real object of these conferences was not discovered until her arrival at Rome, when she prevailed on her brother to remove Hay and Murray, and invest Atterbury with the principal management of his affairs in France. His sanguine expectations soon led him to anticipate the fall of Sir Robert Walpole, whom he always considered as the greatest support of the reigning family; and whose disgrace, he thought, would be followed by the ascendancy of the Jacobite party in England, and the restoration of the Stuarts†.

Notwithstanding his boasted philosophy, Atterbury passed his time in exile, in a manner which reflects no credit on the firmness of his mind, or the purity of his principles. The restlessness of his temper, his aspiring ambition, his constant cabals, his anxious desire to return, the narrowness of his income, com-

His conduct
in exile;

* Secret Intelligence from Paris; Orford and Walpole Papers.

† Ibid.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

and death.

Steadiness to
the Protestant
religion.

His papers
deposited in
the Scots
College.

pared with his former opulence, and the continual defection of his partizans in England, preyed upon a mind like his, fed with hopes which were constantly disappointed, and stung with resentment which could not be gratified. His situation was embittered by the ill conduct of his son, and by the death of his beloved daughter Mrs. Morice, who expired in his arms, and of which sad event he has given a pathetic account in a letter to Pope. He died at Paris, on the 15th of February 1731, in the 70th year of his age.

One fact highly honourable to him, ought not to be omitted; he remained, at all times, true to the Protestant religion, and regular in the performance of its duties. He reprobated with warmth, the conduct of the duke of Wharton, lord North and Grey, and others, who had sacrificed their religion with a view to obtain the Pretender's favour; he even quarrelled with the Duke of Berwick, who proposed giving a Catholic preceptor to the young duke of Buckingham, and used his influence over the dűches, to place none but Protestants about the person of her son.

A short time before his death, Atterbury was alarmed, lest his papers should fall into the hands of government, and that their contents should endanger some of his correspondents. Several of the most secret he destroyed, and with a view to secure the remainder, he applied to the English ambassador, lord Waldegrave, to affix his seal on them, that they might be delivered to his executors*. But lord Waldegrave declined this delicate exertion of his diplomatic privilege, alledging that Atterbury was not intitled to the rights of a British subject. His motives for this refusal were derived from an unwillingness to place himself in the embarrassing situation of receiving orders from his own court, to deliver up the confidential deposit of an exile. Atterbury then applied to the French government, but some difficulties arising, he withdrew his solicitation, and died before he had made an effectual arrangement. On his death, John Sample, a spy in the pay of government, who lived in habits of intimacy with the bishop, endeavoured to obtain possession of the papers, for the ostensible purpose of sending them to the Pretender; but the friends of the deceased interposed; the papers were sent to the Scots College, and the seal of office affixed. Morice, his son-in-law and executor, obtained all those which related to family affairs, and the remainder were left in the college. On his return to England, his papers were seized, and Morice was examined before the privy counsel. Several of these documents, with the marks of office, are preserved among the Orford papers; they contain part of the correspondence between the bishop and his son-in-

* Correspondence, Period III. Article Atterbury.

law, several miscellaneous articles in Atterbury's hand-writing, and some letters from William Shippen, relating to the character of Hampden, in Clarendon's History, which Oldmixon accused Atterbury, bishop Smalridge and Dr. Aldrich, of having interpolated, to which accusation the bishop published a satisfactory answer *. From these papers a selection of the most curious articles is given in the correspondence.

Chapter 23.
1720 to 1723.

The bishop's body was conveyed to England, for the purpose of being interred in Westminster Abbey. On its way the hearse was stopped, and his coffin opened, which occasioned a great outcry against the ministers, as if their vengeance continued to pursue him even after death; but it soon appeared that this indignity proceeded from the custom-house officers, who had information that a considerable quantity of brocades, and other prohibited goods, was concealed in the coffin. This search being effected, the hearse was suffered to proceed without molestation, and the body, after some difficulty, was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Buried in
Westminster
Abbey.

Soon after the suspension of the habeas corpus act, Walpole introduced a bill for raising £. 100,000, by laying a tax on the estates of Papists, which was afterwards extended to all Non-jurors. The liberal spirit of the present age, condemns a measure which tended to increase the disaffection of a large body of subjects, and which the arguments advanced by the minister in its favour were calculated only to palliate, but could not justify. For on being urged by several members, and particularly by Onslow, who declared his abhorrence of persecuting any set of men because of their religious opinions, Walpole represented "the great dangers incurred by this nation since the reformation, from the constant endeavours of Papists to subvert our happy constitution and the Protestant religion, by the most cruel, violent, and unjustifiable methods; that he would not take upon him to charge any particular person among them, with being concerned in this horrid conspiracy: That it was notorious that many of them had been engaged in the Preston rebellion, and some were executed for it; and the present plot was contrived at Rome, and countenanced in popish countries; that many of the Papists were not only well-wishers to it, but had contributed large sums for so nefarious a purpose, and therefore he thought it but reasonable they should bear an extraordinary share of the expences to which they had subjected the nation †". Whatever opinions may be formed of this measure, according to the strict rules of theoretical justice, the policy was unquestionable. This instance of rigour effectually discouraged the Papists from continuing their attempts against the government, and operated as a constant check on the turbulent spirit of the Non-jurors.

Tax on Ro-
man Catho-
lics.

Nov. 23.

1722.

* The bishop's Vindication is printed in Atterbury's Epistolary Correspondence, by Nichols, vol. 3.

† Chandler.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH:

1723.—1724.

Walpole's Son made a Peer.—Character, Views, and Intrigues of Carteret.—Struggle in the Cabinet for Pre-eminence.—Contest for continuing or removing Sir Luke Schaub.—Mission of Horace Walpole to Paris.—Death of the Duke of Orleans.—Successful Efforts of Townshend and Walpole.—Schaub recalled, Horace Walpole nominated Ambassador.—Change in the ministry; Carteret appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.—Unanimity in Parliament.—Walpole made Knight of the Bath and Garter.

June 10.
Walpole declines a peerage.

His son created a baron.

IN this year the king rewarded the services of Walpole, by creating his son a peer. Hitherto it had been customary for those who were intrusted with the chief direction of affairs, to be placed in the house of lords; and the same distinction had been offered by the king to him; but conscious that his talents were best calculated for the house of commons, and that his consequence would soon decline if he was called to the upper house, he waved the dignity for himself, but accepted it for his son, who was created baron of Walpole, in the county of Norfolk. The patent takes notice of this circumstance in a manner highly honourable to the minister: "Our most beloved and most faithful counsellor, Robert Walpole, first commissioner of the treasury, with the assistance of other select persons, and chancellor of our exchequer, having highly recommended himself to our royal favour, by his many services to us, to our house, and to his own country, we did not think him unworthy to be advanced to the rank of the peers of this realm; but though he rather chuses to merit the highest titles than to wear them, we have however thought fit, in order to ennoble his family, to confer on the son the honour due to the father, and to raise to the peerage Robert Walpole, junior, esquire, &c*.

The deaths of Stanhope and Sunderland seemed to remove all obstacles to the power of Townshend and Walpole, who now became the great leaders of the Whigs, and being strictly united both in blood and interest, concentrated

* Tindal, vol. 19. p. 494.

in themselves the favour of the crown, and the confidence of their party. Yet notwithstanding these auspicious appearances, their authority was by no means established on a firm foundation; for besides the opposition, they had to struggle against lord Carteret, who covered, under the appearance of devotion and friendship, inimical designs, and united great talents with the most aspiring ambition.

Chapter 24.
1723 to 1724.

John lord Carteret, was son of George lord Carteret, by lady Grace, daughter of John, the last earl of Bath, of the line of Granville. He was born in 1690, and succeeded his father in the title when he was only in the fifth year of his age; he was educated at Westminster school, and removed from thence to Christ Church college Oxford. He made such an extraordinary progress in his classical studies as induced Swift to reproach him, in his humorous style of panegyric, with having carried away from Oxford, more Greek, Latin, and philosophy than became a person of his rank*. To classical erudition he united a knowledge of the modern languages, and every species of polite literature. He had no sooner taken his seat in the house of peers, than he distinguished himself by an ardent zeal for the Protestant succession, and on the accession of George the First was appointed lord of the bed-chamber.

Character
and views of
Carteret.

On the schism of the Whig ministry, in 1717, he attached himself to Sunderland; was appointed, in 1719, ambassador extraordinary at Stockholm, concluded the peace between Sweden, Hanover, and Prussia, which finally annexed Bremen and Verden to the electorate of Hanover; and mediated a reconciliation between Sweden and Denmark. Soon after his return to England, he was promoted, on the death of Craggs, to the post of secretary of state for the Southern department, and divided in the cabinet with Sunderland and Stanhope, to whom he owed his elevation, against Townshend and Walpole. He was esteemed one of the most eminent speakers in the house of lords, for dignity of manner, propriety of elocution, and force of argument, although his diction was often censured as too florid and metaphorical. He acquired great favour with the king, by his capacity for business and indefatigable application; by his perfect knowledge of foreign affairs; by the facility with which he conversed in French, Italian, and Spanish, and by an acquaintance with the German, which he studied with a view to ingratiate himself still farther with his sovereign.

On the death of Sunderland, he seems to have hesitated whether he should form, in conjunction with Cadogan and Carleton, a party separate from that of Townshend and Walpole, or coalesce with those ministers. He was more

His influence
with du Bois.

* Vindication of Lord Carteret, from the charge of favouring none but Tories, Swift's Works, vol. 10. p. 334.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

spendence and connections with du Bois had been principally conducted. On the reconciliation with Spain, in 1719, he had been sent to Madrid, where he remained till the arrival of William Stanhope, afterwards earl of Harrington. Soon after his return to England, he repaired to Hanover, and was employed by earl Stanhope in keeping up the harmony * between the two courts, and dispelling the doubts and suspicions which occasionally prevailed on both sides. On the death of Stanhope, he was considered by Carteret as the fittest person to repair to Paris.

The arrival of Schaub gave great satisfaction to du Bois, who placed no reliance on Sir Robert Sutton; and who expressed a conviction, that he should not long maintain his credit with the regent, if the confidence which that prince had hitherto reposed on the king of England should be destroyed. Schaub easily convinced the regent of the king's steadiness to his former engagements, and thus supported the authority of du Bois. Sutton was soon afterwards recalled, Schaub solely managed the affairs of England, and his influence increased, as du Bois was successively created, by the interposition of England, cardinal and prime minister. During these transactions, Schaub became the channel through whom the cabals of the Jacobites, and the intrigues of Atterbury were communicated to the British cabinet.

Du Bois transferred his devotion to Carteret, as the minister who was supported by Sunderland, and who boasted that he had succeeded to the influence as well as to the principles of Stanhope: Schaub described him as the person who principally directed foreign affairs; and the friendship of du Bois, whose good-will at this period was highly prized, increased the consequence and promoted the interest of Carteret.

On the death of Sunderland, du Bois offered, through Schaub, to use his interest with George the First in favour of Carteret, but strongly advised him to coalesce with Townshend and Walpole, because he would on one side find it difficult to place himself at the head of the Whigs, and on the other, it would be dangerous to throw the king into the arms of the Tories *. In reply to these offers of assistance, Carteret expressed his gratitude to the cardinal, and informed Schaub, that he had previously resolved to act in that manner, as well with a view to promote the king's service as his own particular interest. He boasted, that he was sufficiently strong to have no apprehensions but those which arise from the common danger to which ministers are subject; he added, that his principles would never change, and intreated him to convince the cardinal, that were he not fully persuaded of the good

* Correspondence between Lord Carteret and Sir Luke Schaub, Hardwicke Papers, May 1722.

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1720 to 1727.

particularly useful at this juncture, because he had succeeded to the influence which earl Stanhope possessed in the cabinet of Versailles, by means of du Bois, who was gratified with a large pension, and who had been raised, by the artful management of the earl of Stair, to the office of minister for foreign affairs. Du Bois was no sooner nominated to this post, than he contrived to appropriate to himself the management of the most secret transactions. All affairs of importance passed through his hands alone; and the members of the respective councils were dismissed*. Stair, who had conducted the negotiations at Paris with great address, having quarrelled with Law, who then directed the affairs of finance, and in conjunction with du Bois governed the regent, Stanhope himself repaired to Paris, and arranged in person with the regent and du Bois, the plan of future intercourse and correspondence. Stair was recalled, and succeeded by Sir Robert Sutton†. The failure of the Mississippi scheme, which reduced France to a state of bankruptcy, and the disgrace of Law, increased the ascendancy of du Bois, and his nomination to the archbishopric of Cambray, was furthered by the express interposition of George the First‡.

On the death of earl Stanhope, du Bois was under great alarm, lest the new ministers should not treat him with the same confidence; and was fully aware that his credit with the regent would cease, if the good understanding which had been recently maintained between England and France should be diminished. He was, however, soon undeceived; lord Townshend, the new secretary of state, expressed his resolution in a letter§ to du Bois, of maintaining the friendship between the two kingdoms, and paid particular compliments to him, as the person who had first promoted and concluded the alliance, which had been so highly beneficial to both parties.

Sends Sir
Luke Schaub
to Paris.

On the death of Craggs, and the removal of Sunderland, the apprehensions of du Bois were again revived and increased by the reports of disunion in the British cabinet, and by exaggerated accounts of the desperate state of affairs in England, from the failure of the South Sea scheme; the regent also experienced the ill effects of these rumours, from the violent opposition made to his measures by the parliament of Paris, in conjunction with those who considered the alliance with England as no less dishonourable than detrimental. For the purpose of removing these alarms, Sir Luke Schaub was deputed to Paris by Carteret. Schaub was a native of Basil, and had been the confidential secretary of earl Stanhope, through whom his first corre-

* Memoires de Du Clos, tom. 1. p. 408.

† Harwicke State Papers, vol. 2. passim.

‡ Du Clos.

§ Townshend Papers.

by flattering his inclination to interfere in the affairs of Sweden, and by favouring the opinions of those Hanoverian ministers, whose advice appeared to him to have weight in the councils of the German cabinet. Chapter 24.
1723 to 1724.

Since the treaty of Nyftadt, which restored peace to the North, the only subject of alarm, on the side of Hanover, was derived from the support which the Czar gave to the duke of Holstein, both in his attempts to obtain the crown of Sweden, and to recover the duchy of Sleswic. Peter, proudly conscious of his strength and resources, and of the formidable marine which he had created in the Baltic, formed the most extensive designs of aggrandisement, and promoted every measure which might embarrass George the First. He had assumed the title of emperor, which the European powers refused to acknowledge. He affianced his daughter Anne *, whom he probably designed for his successor, to the duke of Holstein, and sent to Copenhagen an ambassador, to require that Sleswic should be restored to the duke of Holstein, and that his subjects, in the provinces conquered from Sweden, should be exempted from the payment of the Sound duties. When Frederic the Fourth rejected these demands, Peter fitted out a naval armament, assembled a body of troops on the frontiers of Courland †; and a new war seemed on the point of being kindled in the North. George the First, who by the treaty of Travendahl, had been constituted a guarantee of Sleswic, was bound to succour his ally Frederic; he accordingly concerted the most efficacious means of defence; an English squadron again appeared in the Baltic, and joining the Danish fleet, suspended the operations of Russia, and Peter afterwards turned his views to Sweden, where the weakness of the government, and the fury of contending factions, gave him the fairest prospects of success.

1721.

Such was the general state of Carteret's hopes and intrigues, when the king repaired to Hanover. Townshend had not forgotten that his removal, in 1716, had been principally owing to his continuance in England, by which means a full scope was given to the cabals of Sunderland, and the Hanoverian junto. He was unwilling to fall again into the same error, and accompanied the king. Although it was unusual for both secretaries of state to be absent at the same time, yet Carteret had rendered himself so agreeable, and his presence was thought so necessary for carrying on the negotiation with Schaub, for the marriage and the dukedom, that he received orders to repair to Hanover, and Walpole was appointed to act as sole secretary of state in England, during the king's absence.

Arrival of the
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Period III. intentions of his colleagues, he would not continue long united with
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Promotes the
 views of the
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Notwithstanding these professions, Carteret never cordially coalesced with Townshend and Walpole; he considered himself as succeeding to the interests of Sunderland and Stanhope, expressed, in his letters and conversation, the profoundest veneration for their memory, headed the remnant of their party in the British cabinet, and caballed with the leaders of the Tories, whom he confidently assured of success, by declaring that he was supported by those who governed the king. He was led to make this declaration, which he implicitly believed, because he had secured the concurrence of Bothmar and Bernsdorf, and had gained the countess of Darlington, and her sister, the countess of Platen, whose influence in the Hanoverian councils he considered as predominant. With a view of effecting his purpose, he adopted a proposal, made by Schaub, of a marriage between Amalia, daughter of the countess of Platen, and the count de St. Florentin, son of the marquis de la Vrilliere, secretary of state, which was arranged under the condition, that George the First should obtain from the duke of Orleans, through the means of cardinal du Bois, a dukedom for the family of la Vrilliere. The king eagerly favoured the scheme, and likewise commissioned Schaub to use his name, provided he was secure that the request would not be rejected, and that du Bois could facilitate the grant of the dukedom, without offending those families who aspired to the same honour.

Having thus obtained the concurrence of the king, Carteret entertained the most sanguine expectations, that the management of this secret transaction, confined to him and Schaub, would increase his influence in the cabinet; yet as it was soon known to many persons, he was alarmed lest some rumours should be circulated, and he communicated a part of the business to lord Townshend, but contrived to retain the negotiation entirely in his own hands. With that view he desired Schaub to confine the confidential account to his private correspondence, and in his ostensible letters, to touch upon that affair only in general terms, and to do it in such a manner and with such a *naiveté* as should make it appear as if he had not received any particular order on that subject †. These private communications were constantly shewn to the king, who expressed his satisfaction in the highest terms of approbation.

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Period III.
1720 to 1727.

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Chapter 24.

1723 to 1724.

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Arrival of the king at Hanover.

* See Travels in Russia, Book 4, chap. 10.

† Mallet, Hist. de Dannemarc.

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1720 to 1727.

Struggle between
Townshend
and Carteret.

Townshend
gains the
duchess of
Kendal.

Soon after their arrival at Hanover, the two secretaries of state made a violent struggle for pre-eminence.

Townshend had a difficult and a delicate part to act. He was conscious of Carteret's eminent abilities, and of his high favour with the king; he was not ignorant of his successful intrigues with Bernsdorf and Bothmar, and of having conciliated lady Darlington and the countess of Platen, whose influence he sufficiently appreciated; he was aware that Carteret was eagerly inclined to promote the king's German measures, and that he would be seconded in all his schemes, by the powerful co-operation of the Hanoverian ministers. He felt the necessity of employing intrigue against intrigue, and manœuvre against manœuvre; he laboured effectually to secure the duchess of Kendal, whose ascendancy over the king, fatal experience had demonstrated to be predominant; he fomented the jealousy which she had long entertained, lest the projected marriage should furnish the countess of Platen with a pretence for going to Paris, and from thence to England, and he succeeded so far in gaining her good graces, that he calls her, in his most private letter to Walpole, "the good duchess, and their fast friend". He also obtained the concurrence of lady Walsingham, who possessed great influence over the duchess, and no inconsiderable favour with the king. Relying on these supports, he procured the disgrace of Bernsdorf, and rendered ineffectual the intrigues of Bothmar, who made an unexpected visit to Hanover with a view of aiding Carteret. He obtained the appointment of Hartenberg to the post of minister of state; broke the union which had hitherto subsisted between him and the duchess of Kendal, and rendered them both subservient to his views. He counteracted Carteret in all his measures, obtained the nomination of several places in opposition to his particular recommendation, and so triumphantly carried all before him, that he boasted, in a letter to Walpole, of the success of his political campaign at Hanover, which, in stating the difficulty of his situation, he described as the only place in the world where faction and intrigue are natural and in fashion*.

The superior influence, however, of Townshend and Walpole, was not solely gained by court intrigues, or by the corruption of German favourites, and was not prostituted by a preference of Hanoverian interests to those of England. In the midst of these cabals, the conduct of the brother ministers was firm and manly, moving in direct opposition to the king's prejudices, and the wishes of the German junto. Townshend prevented the adoption of violent measures against Russia, proposed by Bernsdorf and seconded by Carteret,

* See Correspondence.

which if pursued, must have involved England in hostilities with the Czar; and he exultingly informed Walpole, that the king continued true to his resolution of signing no paper relating to British affairs, but in his presence.

Chapter 24
1723 to 1724

The continuance of their authority was also greatly owing to the prosperous state of domestic affairs. The revival of the national credit, and the tranquillity established by the suppression of Atterbury's plot, which reflected great honour on the sagacity and spirit of the ministers, and gave weight and dignity to the councils of England in all parts of Europe, made a deep impression on the mind of the king; and it reflects high honour both on the sovereign of whom it was said, and on the ministers by whom it was said, that the only method of preserving their power beyond fear of competition or accident, was to form some salutary plan for the ease of the people and the benefit of trade, which points the king had much at heart *.

The character and conduct of Walpole, were no less instrumental in forwarding the triumph of his party. The beneficial consequences resulting from his commercial regulations had been too obvious to escape notice; his genius for financial operations, and the ease with which he obtained parliamentary supplies, had induced the king to say that Walpole could create gold out of nothing †. But he did not earn this confidence by mean concessions and base flattery; on the contrary, he ventured to contradict the wishes and prejudices of the king, whenever those wishes or prejudices seemed to militate against the true interests of England. An indubitable proof of this fact appears from the correspondence of this year; the king having requested £.200,000 for the purpose of opposing the efforts of the Czar, to dethrone the king of Sweden, and place the duke of Holstein on the throne, Townshend strenuously exhorted Walpole to procure that sum. In reply, Walpole declared that the £.200,000 was reserved for the king's expences, if he staid at Hanover later than Christmas. He must, therefore, either return to England sooner than he had proposed, or the interference in the Swedish affairs must be relinquished. Walpole at the same time represented his objections to that interference in the strongest terms; explained his own conduct, and the great principle by which he appears to have been uniformly directed, which was to be œconomical of the public money, but to spare no expence when the security of his country was at stake; to avoid foreign entanglements, not to be precipitate in contracting new engagements; to feel the pulse of the nation before any measure of consequence

Assisted by
Walpole.

* See Correspondence, Period III. † Etough, from Scrope, Correspondence, Period IV.

Period III.
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was adopted, and to proceed with due caution. He concluded by observing, that the prosecution of a new war would effectually prevent the adoption of all schemes for the ease of the people and the benefit of trade. The king, so far from being displeased with this freedom, was convinced by his arguments, adopted his views, and declared his resolution of implicitly following the advice of his British cabinet: He spoke of him in the highest terms of approbation, and when Townshend shewed his answer to that letter, and asked whether he had not made too many compliments, observed, *that was impossible, for Walpole never had his equal in business* *.

Notwithstanding, however, these evident proofs of Townshend's and Walpole's ascendancy, reports were industriously circulated, that Carteret's power was superior; and these reports coming by rebound from Hanover, were exaggerated in England and France, and had a considerable effect in suppressing the ardour of their adherents, and in giving spirit to the friends of their rival. It became necessary therefore to undeceive the public, and as Townshend observed, in a letter to Walpole, to obtain some *overt act* in their favour; it was accordingly determined to attack Carteret in his strong hold of Paris, where he supposed himself invincible.

As the union with France was at this juncture esteemed highly necessary to preserve the peace of Europe, and the internal tranquillity of England, those ministers who had the highest credit with the court of Versailles, were held in the highest estimation by George the First. Hence it became a matter of great concern for Townshend and Walpole to have their own confidential ambassador at Paris, which was now the center of the secret negotiations for all foreign affairs, and by these means to prevent their opponent from preserving his weight in the cabinet, which he principally derived from the supposed credit of his creature, Sir Luke Schaub. It was their interest therefore to obtain his removal, and to substitute some person in whom they could place implicit confidence, and whose appointment should prove to the court of France, and convince both friends and adversaries in England, of their ascendancy in the cabinet.

Mission of
Horace Wal-
pole to Paris.

Horace Walpole was selected as the fittest person to bring forward on this occasion. He had from his earliest years been trained to business, under Stanhope, in Spain; under Carleton, when chancellor of the exchequer and secretary of state; under Townshend, at the congress of Gertruydenberg, and during the negotiation for the barrier treaty in 1710. At the accession of George the First, he was appointed secretary to lord Townshend, and

afterwards secretary to the treasury; and, as envoy to the states general, had conducted with great skill and ability the complicated negotiations which took place at the Hague in 1715 and 1716. On the removal of Townshend and Walpole, he had continued invariably attached to them. At the coalition with Sunderland, in 1720, he had been nominated secretary to the duke of Grafton, then lord lieutenant of Ireland, and in 1721 secretary to the treasury. He was deputed, in 1722, as envoy to the Hague; which post he now filled with great credit and dignity, and was particularly noticed by George the First as a man of business and address.

Although Carteret could not avoid foreseeing the decline of his interest from the death of cardinal du Bois, and considering the mission of Horace Walpole, as a proof of his rival's superiority; yet he affected to hold the credit of Schaub and his own as not in the smallest degree diminished.

As Townshend could not propose the mission of Horace Walpole to Paris, without an open quarrel with Carteret, to whose province, as the secretary for the southern department, that appointment belonged, he took advantage of the death of cardinal du Bois, which happened at this time, to carry his scheme gradually into execution. He represented to the king, that this event rendered it necessary to send a confidential person to Paris, for the purpose of gaining authentic information concerning the situation of affairs, and to ascertain whether Schaub was not at variance with count Nocé, who was supposed to govern the duke of Orleans. He named Horace Walpole as proper to be intrusted with so delicate an affair, and suggested, that he might affect to take Paris in his way to Hanover, from a motive of mere curiosity*.

Having succeeded in this point, Townshend suggested, that letters credential, under the pretence of sending a full power to accept the accession of the king of Portugal to the quadruple alliance, would facilitate the execution of the commission. The king approved this hint, and proposed it as his own thought to Carteret, who, though confounded at this mortification, could not venture to make any objection*.

Under these circumstances, Horace Walpole arrived at Paris on the 19th of October, and on the 21st, wrote so masterly a dispatch†, describing the situation of the court of France, the characters of the duke of Orleans, and of the principal ministers, as charmed the king, delighted his friends, and gave a sure omen of the victory which he was to obtain over Schaub, and consequently of that which his brother and Townshend would gain over Carteret. He particularly dwelt on Nocé's aversion to Schaub, on his refusal to listen to

* See Lord Townshend's Letters in September and October. Correspondence, 1723.

† Walpole Papers.

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already entertained of his talents for negotiation, proved the influence he was rapidly acquiring in the cabinet of Versailles, and tended to diminish the credit of Carteret and Schaub. The king, on his return to England, convinced that he had been deceived by Schaub, and that the obstacles to the grant were insuperable, reluctantly withdrew his solicitation. Carteret had the unwelcome task of commanding Schaub not to press the affair any farther, and of inclosing a letter * from the king to the duke of Bourbon, declaring that it never was his intention to make the dukedom a state affair, and declining to insist on a request which was disagreeable to the king of France and the prime minister. Carteret, however, was still so convinced of his superior favour, that he either disbelieved, or affected to disbelieve the reports of his declining influence. He filled his letters to Schaub with repeated declarations, that the king approved their conduct; exhorted him to be perfectly tranquil, and to bear all mortifications, until the affair of the dukedom should be finished; expressed his full conviction that they should maintain their ground, and that his own authority was stronger than ever; yet at the very time his own fall and the removal of Schaub were evident, from the appointment of Horace Walpole to be envoy extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the court of Versailles. The additional honour thus conferred increased the jealousy of Schaub, who found all the assurances of his patron belied, and himself in danger of being recalled from Paris. But even this mortification did not induce Carteret to acknowledge the superiority of his rivals; he still gave Schaub the strongest assurances of support from the king; advised him to attach himself to the duke of Bourbon and Madame de Prie; he declared, that the king was secretly inclined in his favour, but that he did not love disputes, and was unwilling to require such explanations as would force him to take a decided part. He observed, that the answer to the duke of Bourbon could by no means be interpreted, as if the king abandoned his request of the dukedom, although he did not desire that it might be considered as a public affair.

Character of
Cadogan.

Carteret perhaps had sufficient reason to be secure of his victory, as well because he was personally a favourite with the king, as because he was joined by a formidable combination of men who possessed great weight and consequence. Amongst the members of the cabinet who acted with him, was William earl of Cadogan, who had concentrated in himself the posts of commander in chief, and master of the ordnance, and who was supported by the friends and adherents of his deceased patron, John duke of Marlbo-

Chapter 24.
1723 to 1724.

rough, particularly by the duchess, whose enormous wealth enabled her occasionally to forward or obstruct the public loans, and who was highly offended with Walpole, for presuming to raise money at a less interest than she had required. Cadogan was frank, open, vehement, impatient of contradiction, and inclined, in case of difficulties, rather to cut the gordian knot with his sword, than to attempt by patience to unravel its intricacy. He was in high favour with the king for his knowledge of foreign languages, his acquaintance with foreign manners, and for an ease and address which was partly derived from an early intercourse with the world, and partly from an intermixture of military and civil occupations. At this crisis, Cadogan had rendered himself so obnoxious to Walpole, that it was determined to open the political campaign with his dismissal, which was to be a prelude to other changes. The post of commander in chief had been promised to lord Cobham, and the mastership of the ordnance to the duke of Argyle; but the king gave a decided negative to this proposal, by declaring that he would not part with Cadogan. As this attack was made at the opening of the session, when the predominant influence of Walpole in the house of commons, seemed to countenance an opinion, that his demands must be complied with; this repulse was considered by the friends of Carteret and Cadogan, as the sure omen of his downfall.

In the midst of these divisions in the cabinet, the affairs in Ireland, relating to Wood's patent, gave Carteret an opportunity of impressing the king with unfavourable sentiments of Walpole, to whose misconduct he principally imputed these disturbances. He fomented the discontents in Ireland, and caballed with the Brodricks, who were incensed against the duke of Grafton, lord lieutenant, for ascribing the opposition solely to the secret manœuvres of lord chancellor Midleton, and for insisting, that either he should be deprived of the seals, or should not be appointed one of the lords justices*. Their discontent was no less vehement against Walpole, who supported the duke of Grafton; and Carteret increased their consequence, by enumerating to the king the services which the family had performed in favour of his succession, by exaggerating their influence in Ireland, and by dwelling on the ill consequences which would result from depriving lord Midleton of the seals. These commotions, although finally quelled by the prudence and ability of Walpole, yet gave great embarrassment to his administration, and delayed the removal of Carteret.

Efforts of
Carteret.

* See Chapter 26th on the Disturbances in Ireland.

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1720 to 1727.

Baffled by
Walpole.

Walpole baffled his adversaries with the same arts which they endeavoured to employ against him. Bolingbroke had betrayed to him the intrigues of Carteret with the Tories, and had made offers from some of their leaders to join administration; although he had rejected these overtures, and declined a general coalition with them, yet he detached several from the party, and amused others. He gained a great accession of strength by securing lord Harcourt, whom he introduced into the privy council, gratified with an increase of his pension, and for whom he obtained the appointment of one of the lords justices during the king's absence. By these means the leaders of the disaffected party were allured with hopes of similar honours and emoluments, if they would follow the same example; and highly dissatisfied with Carteret, made little opposition to the measures of government; flattering themselves that his removal would be soon followed by their introduction into power. To these expectations may be partly attributed the extreme tranquillity which distinguished the next session of parliament.

1724.
Parliamentary proceedings.

While this struggle for power was carrying on in the interior of the cabinet, public affairs were conducted with unexampled prosperity and quiet. The parliament met on the 9th of January; the speech from the throne concluded with dignified expressions of the connection between the liberty and prosperity of the nation. "In the present happy situation of our affairs, I have nothing more to recommend to you, than that you would make use of the opportunity, which your own good conduct has put into your hands, in considering of such farther laws as may be wanting for the ease and encouragement of trade and navigation, for the employment of the poor, and for exciting and encouraging a spirit of industry in the nation. I am fully satisfied, that the trade and wealth of my people, are the happy effects of the liberties they enjoy, and that the grandeur of the crown consists in their prosperity."

The address passed not only without a single dissenting voice, but even without a debate; and during the whole session the only motion that occasioned a division, was one for keeping up the same number of troops for 1724, as was maintained the year before, which was carried by a majority of 240 against 100. On the 24th of April, this session, so tranquil in effect, and so barren of incidents, was closed by a speech which commended in high terms of approbation, the unanimity, cheerfulness, and dispatch with which the business had been conducted, and expressed the highest satisfaction, that the same force was maintained by sea and land, which had enabled the nation

to hold among the powers of Europe, the rank and figure due to her honour and dignity, without laying any new or additional burthen on the people *.

The unexampled unanimity and dispatch of business which distinguished this session, was almost solely owing to the good management of Walpole, and to his influence in the house of commons, which Saint John Brodrick, in a letter to lord Midleton, calls *prodigious* †. Hence his preponderance increased in the cabinet; and the king was induced to take a decided resolution in his favour, between the two discordant parties. As a prelude to the removal of Carteret, Horace Walpole was named ambassador to Paris. Yet such was the credit of Carteret, that this nomination was not finally effected without great difficulty. His address still supplied proofs of his influence, when it had almost totally declined; and Horace Walpole, in his private letters to his brother and Townshend, made no less heavy complaints of his situation at Paris, than Schaub did of his disgusts to Carteret ‡. The dispatches, though written to him and Schaub jointly, were by private intimations to the messenger, carried first to Schaub, and communicated by him to the French ministers, before Horace Walpole was informed of their contents; the dispatches for Spain, and the plenipotentiaries at the congress of Cambray, were enclosed to him, perused by him, and forwarded by him. Of this measure, Horace Walpole bitterly complained to his brother, declared his resolution not to act any longer jointly with Schaub, insisted that one of them must be recalled; and justly observed, that the removal or continuance of Schaub, must prove to the world, either the full establishment or decline of their credit with the king. Walpole and Townshend now found it necessary to exert all their influence, and to employ the utmost address §. They commissioned Horace Walpole to write an ostensible letter to lord Townshend, in which he should draw the character of Sir Luke Schaub, state the impropriety of his conduct, and the disadvantage which was derived to the king's affairs, by maintaining two ministers at Paris with divided authority, and insist on his own resignation, rather than continue in a situation in which he was perpetually thwarted and opposed.

This letter was shewn to the king, and had its due effect. He directed that Schaub should be immediately recalled, and Townshend himself con-

Chapter 24.

1723 to 1724.

Influence of
Walpole.Horace Wal-
pole named
ambassador
to Paris.Schaub re-
called.

* Journals. Chandler.

† Correspondence.

‡ Correspondence, January 5th, 1723.

§ This account of the intrigues of Carteret and Schaub at Paris, and the counter intrigues of Horace Walpole and the brother ministers, is drawn from Sir Luke

Schaub's Papers, in the possession of the earl of Hardwicke, and from the dispatches and letters to and from Horace Walpole, in the Orford and Townshend Papers. The most interesting of which will appear in the Walpole Correspondence.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

veyed the orders to Carteret. But on the evening of the day in which the communication was made, Carteret prevailed on the king to suspend the orders for a precipitate recal of Schaub, and was permitted to send him word that the king deemed his presence in England necessary for his service, and that he might return to Paris for the solemnization of the marriage between the Count de St. Florentin, and the young countess of Platen.

Fall of Carteret.

In obtaining this point, Carteret had another object in view, besides softening the disgrace of Schaub, and mortifying his rival; it was to send him back to Paris, with a commission, which would have rendered his presence more necessary, and finally occasioned the removal of Horace Walpole. This scheme was no less than to propose a treaty of marriage between the young king of France and the princess Anne, the eldest daughter of the prince of Wales. It was concerted between Carteret and the countess of Darlington at London, Sir Luke Schaub, Madame de la Vrilliere and Madame de Prie at Paris, and the countess of Platen at Hanover. Sir Luke Schaub had the indiscretion to make the proposal to the king, in his audience, but it was received with such marks of dissatisfaction, as gave Townshend and Walpole an opportunity to remonstrate against his presumption, and represent to the king the great disadvantage which would result to his affairs in France, if so indiscreet a person should be sent back as his minister. Schaub was therefore only permitted to return for the purpose of assisting at the Count de St. Florentin's marriage. The king gave a portion of £. 10,000 to the bride, but no dukedom was conferred on the family of la Vrilliere: Schaub was then recalled from Paris, and Horace Walpole received his credentials of ambassador from the duke of Newcastle, appointed secretary of state in the place of Carteret, who was constituted lord lieutenant of Ireland. The duke of Grafton was made lord chamberlain; Henry Pelham, brother of the duke of Newcastle, and the confidential friend of Walpole, was nominated secretary at war; and many of Walpole's friends were placed in the subordinate posts of government.

Changes in the ministry.

Ascendency of Townshend and Walpole.

Thus terminated the contest between Carteret and the brother ministers; and though the victory was not as complete as they expected, because they could not obtain the removal of Cadogan, Roxburgh, and Middleton, yet it gave weight to their administration, and considerably diminished the strength of the opposing party in the cabinet. Carteret supported his defeat with great dignity and firmness of mind. He declared, that having no obligations

obligations to lord Townshend for his advancement to the post of secretary of state, he was resolved never to have submitted to him in that capacity. He did not affect to conceal his dissatisfaction at the ill usage he had received, and particularly complained that Horace Walpole had been sent to interlope in his province. While he avowed that he was defeated, he declared himself happier and easier in the situation of lord lieutenant, than that of secretary of state, exposed to continual mortifications; and professed his resolution to continue on good terms with the ministers, and to promote the measures of government*. Yet his temper was so sanguine and his spirit so little depressed, that he persevered in asserting, that his favour with the king was greater than ever, that his enemies had gained no real strength by the late alterations†, and, in expectation of a favourable change, delayed, under various pretences, his departure for Ireland, until the month of October, when the necessary attendance on the duties of his vice royalty annihilated his hopes. Townshend and Walpole were now in such high favour, that they prevailed over the king's inclinations, and overcame his jealousy of the prince of Wales, which, notwithstanding the apparent reconciliation, continued still unabated, and shewed itself in repeated refusals to confer any particular mark of favour on those who were personally attached to his son. With a view to gratify the prince, and to secure the earl of Scarborough, who was his master of the horse, and, next to Sir Spencer Compton, his greatest favourite, the brother ministers had promised him the garter; and as it was the custom of the king always to retain one vacant ribband, they waited until there were two undisposed of, when Townshend requested one of them for Scarborough. The king said, he could not comply with his request, because it was already conferred; and when Townshend asked, with some degree of surprise, who was the person? the king answered, "I intend it for your lordship." Townshend, after expressing a deep sense of his gratitude, begged leave to decline it. The king still insisted, and Townshend still declined. "Lord Scarborough," he replied, "is now at the door of the closet, expecting every moment to be called in to thank your majesty for the honour; he will naturally suppose that I have deceived him, and that after having left him with a promise to intercede in his favour, I have asked it for myself; which will ruin my character as a man of honour and veracity." "Well then," returned the king, "for once I will break through my usual rule, and will confer both the vacant garters; one shall be

* Stephen Poyntz to Horace Walpole, April 5th 1724. Walpole Papers.

† Saint John Brodrick to lord Middleton.—Correspondence.

Period III.
1720 to 1727.

your's, and the other shall be given to lord Scarborough, whom you may now introduce *. Scarborough had accordingly the first, and both were installed at the same time †.

The king delays his journey to Hanover.

The king gave the strongest proof of the full confidence which he placed in Townshend and Walpole, by submitting to defer his journey to Hanover, even after he had fixed the time of his departure. This change of resolution was effected by the representations of lord Townshend, who stated in firm, though respectful terms, the inconveniences which would result from his absence at this period ‡.

Meeting of parliament.

The continuance of the king in England had operated in suppressing public clamours, and in promoting public tranquillity. The parliament, which met on the 12th of November, was opened by a speech from the throne, which dwelt with particular energy and satisfaction on the prosperous state of affairs: "Peace with all powers abroad, at home perfect tranquillity, plenty, and an uninterrupted enjoyment of all civil and religious rights, are most distinguishing marks of the favour and protection of divine Providence, and these, with all their happy consequences, will, I doubt not, by the blessing of God upon our joint endeavours, be long continued to my people." "The same provision by sea and land, for the defence and safety of the nation, will continue to make us respected abroad, and consequently secure at home. The same attention to the ease and encouragement of trade and navigation, will establish credit upon the strongest basis, and raise such a spirit of industry, as will not only enable us gradually to discharge the national debt, but will likewise greatly increase the wealth, power and influence of this kingdom.——You must all be sensible how much our present happiness is owing to your union and steady conduct; it is therefore wholly unnecessary to recommend to you unanimity and dispatch in all your deliberations. The zeal and abilities you have on all occasions shewn, in supporting the interest of your country, even under the greatest difficulties, leave no room to doubt of my having your entire and effectual concurrence in every thing that can tend to the service of the public, and to the good of my people §."

This session of parliament, no less remarkable for the unanimity with which business was conducted, than for a barrenness of important transactions, was only distinguished by the commencement of Pulteney's opposition,

* This anecdote was communicated by lord Sydney. It is mentioned in a different way by Count Broglie, in a letter to Louis the Fifteenth; but he relates it only as a rumour. Correspondence, 1724.

† Political State.
‡ See Correspondence.
§ Chandler.

the recal of Bolingbroke, events which are noticed in subsequent chapters of this work, and by the impeachment of lord Macclesfield, in which Walpole took very little share. It was closed on the 31st of May.

A few days before the prorogation of parliament, the order of the Bath was revived, and the minister was created a knight, from which period he assumed the title of Sir Robert Walpole, and in 1726, he was installed knight of the garter; the value of which distinction is greatly enhanced by the consideration, that excepting admiral Montagu, afterwards earl of Sandwich, he was the only commoner who had ever been dignified by that order.

On this event he had the honour of being congratulated by the author of the Night Thoughts, in a poem, called the Instalment. The poet commences in an exalted strain of panegyric, by invoking the shades of the deceased knights to descend from heaven to assist at the inauguration of their new compeer :

Ye mighty dead, ye garter'd sons of praise !
 Our morning stars ! Our boast in former days !
 Which hov'ring o'er, your purple wings display,
 Lur'd by the pomp of this distinguish'd day,
 Stoop and attend : by one the knee be bound ;
 One, throw the mantle's crimson folds around ;
 By that, the sword on his proud thigh be plac'd,
 This, clasp the diamond girdle round his waist ;
 His breast, with rays, let just Godolphin spread ;
 Wife Burleigh plant the plumage on his head ;
 And Edward own, since first he fix'd the race,
 None prest fair glory with a swifter pace.

Chapter 24.
 1723 to 1724.

Walpole created knight of the bath and garter.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH:

1725—1726.

Anecdotes of Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke.—Disagreement between him and Oxford.—His Schemes in favour of the Pretender.—Disgraced on the Accession of George the First.—Flies.—Joins the Pretender.—Appointed his Secretary of State.—Removed.—Causes of his Dismissal.—Makes Overtures to the British Cabinet.—Receives a Promise of being restored.—Writes his Letter to Sir William Wyndham, under that Supposition.—Censures Ministers.—Makes Overtures to them.—Cabals against them.—Renews his Offers of Attachment to them.—Conduct of Walpole in his Favour.—Bolingbroke receives his Pardon in Blood.—His Overtures to the Walpoles.—Act of Parliament in his Favour.—Motives for Walpole's Conduct.—Bolingbroke joins Opposition.—Remarks on his Conduct and Writings.

WHEN Atterbury arrived at Calais, he found Bolingbroke, who had just obtained his pardon, waiting for a conveyance to England, on which he expressed his surprise, and exclaimed, "Then I am exchanged." And well might the bishop be astonished, that a minister who had secretly caballed to place the Pretender on the throne, and had, since his flight, openly engaged in his service, should experience the lenity of government, and be permitted to return to his native country, which he had endeavoured to distress by secret intrigues and open rebellion.

The pardon of Bolingbroke, granted by the king, was soon followed by the repeal of the bill of attainder passed against him in 1716; and Walpole, who had moved for that bill, moved also for its repeal; an act of imprudence which he committed in opposition to the advice of his most approved friends, the opinion of several of the king's ministers, and in contradiction to his own judgment. I shall in this chapter attempt to develop the causes which led to this extraordinary event, and explain the reasons which induced Walpole to take a step, of which he too late repented. This inquiry will be introduced by a few biographical anecdotes, for the purpose of connecting the narrative.

Chapter 25.
1725 to 1726.

wick, was born in 1678 *. He received his education at Eton school, and completed it at Christ Church, Oxford. He distinguished himself at a very early period by his talents and excesses; and made so conspicuous a figure in the house of commons, that in 1704, he was appointed secretary at war, by the influence of Harley, to whom he attached himself, and with whom he acted under the banner of the Tories. On the removal of Harley, in 1707, St. John resigned his employments, and followed the fortune of his benefactor. On the dismissal of the Whig administration, Harley proposed to reinstate him in his employment, and expressed a desire to admit some of the most moderate Whigs into the administration. But St. John opposed the coalition, and insisted on being appointed secretary of state for foreign affairs, with which demand Harley was obliged to comply.

Bolingbroke was suspected, during his embassy at Paris, of having betrayed the secrets of the cabinet to the French court. These suspicions of his treachery were probably derived from his inattention and love of pleasure; for Madame Tencin, so remarkable for beauty, abilities, gallantry, and skill in political intrigue, drew him into a connection with her, at the instigation of Torcy, and contrived to steal from him several papers and dispatches †.

Two such opposite characters as Oxford and Bolingbroke, could not long cordially agree. Bolingbroke possessed great animation of countenance, elegance of manners, and dignity of deportment. He was fascinating in conversation, of commanding eloquence, abounding in wit and fancy, master of polite learning, which he knew how to draw forth on all occasions. In his private character he was without morals and without principles, not only not concealing, but rather proud of his profligacy. He was fond of pleasure, yet never suffered his amusements to interfere with affairs of importance; affecting to resemble the characters of Alcibiades and Petronius, by mixing pleasure and business, in which, when necessity required his attendance, he was so indefatigable, that he would drudge like a common clerk. Quick in apprehension, easy of access, no less artful in negotiation than decisive and vigorous in action, clear and perspicuous in his style, but too fond of declamation and metaphor; adopting and enforcing all the violent measures of the Tories; scorning to temporise, caballing with the

Disagreement
with Oxford.

* The age of lord Bolingbroke is erroneously stated by his biographer, and by Collins, both of whom say he died in 1751, in his 79th year, which places his birth in 1673. On the faith of these authorities, I mentioned, in an early part of this work, p. 14, that he was three years older than Sir Robert Walpole,

but the fact is, he was two years younger, as appears from one of his letters to Sir William Wyndham, dated *New year's day* 1738, in which he says "nine months hence I shall be three-score." (Egremont Papers.)

† Horace Walpole's Letter to Lord Townshend, Nov. 1. 1723. Walpole Papers.